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Merchant of Venice
Julius Caesar
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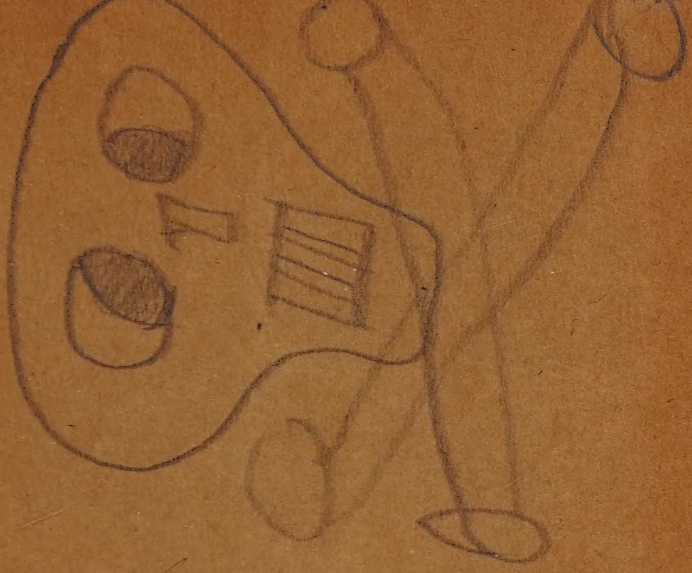

Allen Flanagan

THE PRINCIPLES AND PROGRESS OF ENGLISH POETRY

The MMCo.

ENGLISH POETRY

ITS PRINCIPLES AND PROGRESS

WITH REPRESENTATIVE MASTERPIECES
AND NOTES

BY

CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY, LITT.D., LL.D.
PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

AND

CLEMENT C. YOUNG, B.L.
HEAD OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT IN THE LOWELL
HIGH SCHOOL, SAN FRANCISCO

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WITH PIPE AND FLUTE

With pipe and flute the rustic Pan
Of old made music sweet for man;
And wonder hushed the warbling bird,
And closer drew the calm-eyed herd,—
The rolling river slowlier ran.

Ah! would,—ah! would, a little span,
Some air of Arcady could fan
This age of ours, too seldom stirred
With pipe and flute!

But now for gold we plot and plan;
And from Beersheba unto Dan,
Apollo's self might pass unheard,
Or find the night-jar's note preferred;—
Not so it fared, when time began,
With pipe and flute!

AUSTIN DOBSON.

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PREFACE

This book is designed to serve as a kind of compendium or manual, not only for students and teachers, but for the general reader who takes interest in the materials and history of the higher English poetry, and seeks a simple statement of its principles in relation to life, conduct, and art.

In the preface to a little volume, entitled the *Poetry of the People*, I have said that the poetry of refined self-consciousness and deliberate art, the poetry that requires analysis, should not be forced down the throats of children. The love of poetry should precede the study of it. Ballads, poems of national history and sentiment, songs and lays that were ever on the lips of our forefathers because they sprang from the heart, — the poetry of the people, in short, — should be made familiar to our children, because it is simple, ingenuous, manly, redolent of national tradition and fitted to inculcate national ideals in the rising generation. Such poetry is enjoyed and loved ; and learned because it is a joy to learn it. So a gateway is opened to the Courts of Song, where once admitted the novitiate turns not back. He presses from cloisters of far-heard melody to the chanting choir ; the echoing clerestory calls to his imagination ; his sense is ravished and his soul refined with ever new delight. The poetry of the people appeals to the communal consciousness and the untutored taste. The one it welds, the other fashions. The poetry of art is the poetry of the individual, of personal effort or thought, of yearnings rarely all comprehended and less than half expressed, of conscious idealization, of social themes made spiritual. Sometimes it is the criticism of life, sometimes of manners ; sometimes the genial mirroring of the truth, sometimes the smile that plays upon its face — that mocks, but mocking enlightens and diverts. Suggestive and allusive, and elusive too, its pleasure is not bounded by the melody, but is in the counterpoint and thorough-bass and

over-tones. It is of the poet of simpler kind that the Bard of Venusia writes

> Os tenerum pueri balbumque poeta figurat,
> Torquet ab obscenis jam nunc sermonibus aurem;

and of the poet who has become more conscious of a social aim —

> Mox etiam pectus praeceptis format amicis,
> Asperitatis et invidiae corrector et viae,
> Recte facta refert, orientia tempora notis
> Instruit exemplis —

but it is of the poet of art that he concludes

> inopem solatur et aegrum.

The poetry of art comforts, heartens, and uplifts; illumines life and purifies, creates, and recreates. Such poetry calls for study that it may be understood, and so enjoyed. And it is with such poetry that this volume deals.

When the Macmillan Company asked me to collaborate in preparing a book planned by Mr. Young, — a book which aimed to print with running historical and critical comment the poems required for entrance to most American colleges, — and to write an introduction thereto on the principles of poetry, I felt that I could not well refuse. For the book was to appear whether I chose to be the collaborator or not; and it was of just the design that I had long hoped I might see realized. There had been collections of poems by the score, with notes and without, and many histories of English literature in general, but no volume of poetry and the special history of poetry in one. There had been independent and exhaustive treatises on poetics, but very few adapted to the use of schools and of the general reader, and none accompanied by the historical and poetic material from which the principles were drawn and to which they might be directly applied. The chance to collaborate in a history of poetry certified by the masterpieces themselves, limited to the greatest poets and to the simplest purpose, and to set some brief outline of a poetic creed before a body of readers, ingenuous, because not yet perverted by wrong teaching, or at any rate because still desirous of learn-

ing,— such a chance I felt that I had no right to forego. The practical experience of my colleague, his scholarship and assiduity, have rendered the whole task pleasant,— profitable also, let us hope, to those for whom it was undertaken.

At the request of Mr. Young, and with his coöperation, I have attempted in what follows to outline the method of this volume. The introduction on the Principles of Poetry aims to answer the questions that inevitably arise when poetry is the subject of discussion, and to give the questioner a grasp upon the essentials necessary to appreciation and to the formation of an independent judgment. Hence the discussion of the relation of art to nature, and of literature to art; of poetry to literature, and of verse and prose to poetry; of the creative or imaginative expression in poetry proper, and of its association with rhetoric and logic; of rhythm and metre, melody, harmony, and structural form in verse, and the relation of all these to the organic principles of speech; of the kinds of poetry, ballad and epic, reflective and descriptive recital, lyric, elegy, and ode, drama, pastoral and idyl, satire and philosophical poem, and the æsthetic conditions precedent to and attendant upon each in turn; finally, of poetic tests and of the terminology of such criticism as the general reader is likely to consider or apply. This portion of the book should be mastered by the teacher, and retailed to younger pupils as occasion offers and discretion dictates. By the more advanced student it should be read, as a whole, sometime during the course, for it presents a system; and it should be applied continually in the appraisement of poems as they are studied.

The chapters on the Progress of English Poetry aim to focus in one study the theory, history, and practice of the art. Some years ago it was customary in school, and too frequently in college, to teach a catalogue of names and dates and barren biographies under the style of History of Literature, — little attention being paid to the masterpieces of prose and poetry that gave the names, dates, and biographies a *raison d'être*. Yesterday the pendulum had swung almost to the other extreme and Doctor Syntaxes, in search of the "pedagogesque," not infrequently would light upon High School pupils, and graduates, too, who displayed commendable familiarity with *The Ancient Mariner* or *Lycidas*,

the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* or *The Rape of the Lock*, but had not the vaguest idea of the lives or periods of the respective authors. Burns, Wordsworth, Milton, Pope, Chaucer, and Spenser might all have been contemporaries in the latter half of the nineteenth century, for all the rising generation cared. The unwarranted and absurd reduction of the spelling used by authors of widely separate age to a common level of modernity was partly to blame; but more still, the lack of all attempt on the part of those in educational authority to connect our poetry with the social and historical conditions from which it springs.

As a corrective to these one-sided tendencies none but the most important poets are here represented or even mentioned. These and their poems have been grouped in the literary periods to which they successively belong. The account of each author has been introduced by a more general account of the characteristics and tendencies of his age; and, in the special criticism of the poems by which he is represented (whether in the text or the Notes), consideration has been given not only to his personal and historical conditions, but to the relation of his work to poetic principles and the development of national literature. It will, naturally, be found necessary, when dealing with High School pupils, to read the poems in order of simplicity — as outlined below. But even so, the reading of the biographies concerned should precede the reading of the poem; and so far as possible the literary and historical period should be characterized. At the end of the course, — say during the last term of the senior year, — the history should be read in review from beginning to end, and supplemented by some larger treatise on the development of English literature; its relation to social and political history, and the history of literary types. For the cultivation of the historical sense is no less important than that of the æsthetic, the moral, the spiritual. Without the former the latter are out of alignment.

While this book attempts to cover as much as possible of the poetry — save the Shakespearian drama, the epic, and the metrical romance, of which numerous excellent editions already exist — required for admission, not to one, but to *all* of our American colleges or universities, it has also included such other poems

as are both representative of their literary periods and necessary to the constitution of an introductory course in English masterpieces. As in the historical sketch only the greatest authors are mentioned, so in the poetical collection only the best poems are included. And, except in two instances, the poems in their integrity. The *Faerie Queene* and *Childe Harold* are not required for entrance to any American college at the present time; but, since no reader can escape the imputation of ignorance who has not tasted of their waters, we furnish a nipperkin of each, in hope that deeper draughts may yet be drained from the springs themselves. *Sir Launfal*, although the work of an American, is printed here for the convenience of the student; but the theme and treatment are such that it readily finds a place beside the other poems of chivalry here included. It contributes also to the history of English poetry in general. That the *Commemoration Ode* and Whittier's *Snow-Bound* have not been included is due merely to the accident that they are not yet, in the commercial sense, public property.

The texts are as nearly as possible what their authors have given us. In the matter of spelling we have followed the practice of Professor Hales in his excellent collection of *Longer English Poems*, and of later editors — the best of the present generation. This we have done at the expense of some little trouble to ourselves, but with a very clear notion of what we were about. In the alteration of a text, even in the minutest particular, questions of historical and moral propriety are involved. The orthography of Chaucer is part of the historical characteristic of his writings. Nobody nowadays would think of altering it unless he were preparing a popular edition of the poems; but then he would also alter the language, omitting obsolete words and paraphrasing those that were difficult of understanding. In short, he would sacrifice the historical flavor and much of the literary reality in order to produce a text that might be immediately intelligible. Such an editor would succeed in producing a literary composite; but the result would not be Chaucer, nor Spenser, nor would it reflect the age and atmosphere of either — a Chaucer in top-hat and patent leathers, perhaps, or a Spenser in tuxedo. We are not issuing a second-hand semblance of any of our poets. The exact texts of

Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Burns, are just as necessary to the appreciation of their historical flavor as are exact diction and orthography to the appreciation of Chaucer and Spenser. Upon historical accuracy depends moral propriety, in a large degree, in matters of literature. To make a poet of a previous generation look like one of to-day is to place his views of life in a light relatively false: to lead readers to expect of this modernly apparelled gentleman the sentiments of our modern age. The archaic spelling not only helps to preserve the flavor of the original and of the period of its production; it constantly suggests interesting truths regarding the development of the language. It is, moreover, after the time of Chaucer and Spenser, not appreciably harder to decipher than the orthography of to-day. For the child whose spelling becomes confused in the process, we are moved with pity. For such doubtless will be designed Spelling Reformatories, in the equilibrated future, where they and their sympathetic sponsors may avoid the inconsistencies of life. As I have elsewhere said we are so much afraid of wringing the withers of memory, nowadays, that in most children the memory has grown too soft for saddling.

In the Notes at the end of the volume the attempt has been made to keep in mind a few definite considerations. First, *Notes are for the student and should be strictly practical.* Since they will, for the most part, be used by young people, they have been made on the basis of actual experience in the class room. They aim to give nothing but what the student can use; to leave out all that will not directly aid him in understanding and appreciating the poem. Hence comments in the way of theory, whether philological or critical, have been so far as possible avoided. Second, *Notes should clear up difficulties.* Though inspiration and enjoyment are doubtless the chief ends of poetry, they can be attained only if the reader understand the thought of the poet and his art, and, therefore, the words by which these are conveyed. Third, *Notes should not tell the student what he may reasonably be expected to find out for himself.* Explanations are given only when they cannot with readiness and economy be obtained from the ordinary books of reference. There should be within the reach of every pupil at least the following manuals: an English

dictionary, such as Webster's *International*, *The Standard* or *The Century*, or a good abridgment for his own desk, such as Webster's *Academic;* a dictionary of classical names and myths, or some complete manual of mythology, such as Gayley's *Classic Myths in English Literature;* a Bible, if possible with a concordance; and a good History of English Literature with which to supplement the outline given in this book. The information easily to be found in these the editors have tried not to duplicate here. The Table of Poets and Sovereigns which precedes the chapters in this volume on the Progress of Poetry will be helpful in determining questions of relative chronology. Fourth, *Notes should be adapted to the requirements of pupil and poem.* Chaucer and Burns, with their textual peculiarities, need notes entirely different from Milton and Pope with their allusive character, or Wordsworth and Browning with their subtlety of thought. The pupil of lower grade requires a kind of help different from that demanded by his seniors. Some of the simpler poems here have accordingly been annotated, not with few notes because they are simple, but with ample notes because presumably the pupil who will study them is young. Fifth, *Notes should be suggestive.* The inability to realize what he ought to see in a poem, or to recognize what it really contains, is probably the chief drawback with the immature reader. The teacher during class recitation, of course, bears this fact in mind; but the pupil will always gain from the recitation in proportion as he is prepared for it. The editors, therefore, offer no apology for the numerous directive questions and suggestions of the notes. It is hoped that they may prove a real advantage to pupil and teacher. Sixth, *Notes are valuable only as a means to an end,* — that the reader may gain the greatest possible pleasure and inspiration from the poems themselves. In most cases he should endeavor to get all he can from the text before resorting to the notes at all. Crutches are worse than useless where one finds himself able to walk without them.

The order in which these poems are studied will of course vary with the maturity of the student and the judgment of the teacher. Advanced students and general readers will naturally take histories and texts in their chronological order. But beginners who are

pursuing this study as one of several, during the four years of a High School course, will probably find the following sequence, suggested by practical experience with High School pupils, much more suitable:

First Year. — *The Prisoner of Chillon, Horatius, The Forsaken Merman, The Cotter's Saturday Night, Tam o' Shanter, The Deserted Village.*

Second Year. — *The Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*, the selection from *The Faerie Queene, L'Allegro, Il Penseroso,* Gray's *Elegy, The Ancient Mariner.*

Third Year. — *Alexander's Feast, The Rape of the Lock*, the selections from Shelley, the selections from *Childe Harold, Sir Launfal*, the *Idylls of the King, Rugby Chapel.*

Fourth Year. — *Comus, Lycidas*, and the sonnets of Milton, the selections from Wordsworth, the selections from Keats, the rest of Tennyson, the selections from Browning, the rest of Arnold. A general review of the principles of poetry, and of poems and authors in their relation to the historical account here given of the progress of poetry, should complete the course.

With regard to exercises in the class room a few words may be serviceable:

1. *Purpose.* The aim of the teacher in dealing with masterpieces of poetry should be to develop in his pupils the habit of observing closely and keenly the phenomena of natural and human existence, with a view to understanding their meaning as parts of an organized and living whole; to equip the mind with the knowledge resulting from the imaginative treatment of things, that is, with the riches of poetry, — and to stimulate it to healthy imaginative power; to cultivate a sense for that which is expressive in nature and in literature, and a desire to clothe one's own best thought, if possible, in true and beautiful form. Finally, to emphasize the verities of life and the laws of conduct.

2. *Method.* As in all study of English classics, the lessons assigned should be not arbitrary and inconsequential fragments, but integral parts of the poem; and the interest of the pupil should be so aroused as to insure his reading the whole poem out of school before its analysis in the class room is completed.

(*a*) Introductory: The study of the poem proper should be prefaced by investigation into the life and times of the poet, his place and the position of the poem in the development of English literature, the social and historical features of the times and persons that the poem characterizes, and the geography of the scenes that serve as a background. These items of information may be supplied in three ways: by a study of the history contained in this volume; by informal but carefully prepared talks, in which the instructor imparts the results of his reading on the subject; and by gradual and more detailed work, in the way of reports prepared by members of the class.

As general guides may be mentioned: Stopford Brooke's *English Literature*, Saintsbury's *Short History*, and Thomas Arnold's *Manual of English Literature*. Such works as Morley and Tyler's *Manual of English Literature*, Taine's *History of English Literature*, Morley's exhaustive work, *English Writers*, Courthope's *History of English Poetry*, Ward's *English Poets*, the *History of English Literature* in four volumes by Brooke, Saintsbury, Gosse, and Dowden, Garnett and Gosse's *English Literature*, and the *English Men of Letters* series, should be in the High School library for purposes of reference. Chronological outlines and lists of collateral reading will often be of value in orienting the teacher; such, for instance, as Emery's *Notes on English Literature* and Ryland's *Chronological Outlines of English Literature*. But it must be remembered that text-book information about authors or masterpieces, if unaccompanied by acquaintance with the works themselves, is worth little to the learner. Only those dates should be emphasized that are of evident import; they should be given in their sequence and should find a permanent abode in the memory of the pupil.

(*b*) General View: Considerable parts of the masterpiece, or, if possible, the whole masterpiece, having been assigned for study at home, pupils should, in recitation, produce orally the preliminary information described under (*a*), and outline clearly and concisely the argument or narrative of the poem. Each should, then, indicate and try to explain the passages that he found difficult to understand, referring to the class what he cannot explain. Finally, each having pointed out the lines and stanzas that he most likes,

the passages preferred by consensus of opinion (of teacher as well as of class) should be marked to be committed to memory and recited in class. The instructor should encourage such recitation, even to the extent of making it optional with certain other desirable work.

(*c*) Analysis: Next, taking up the poem in detail, the class should examine minutely the obsolete and unusual words, phrases, and constructions, and explain the literary and historical allusions, noting the poetic charm and significance of each. The pupils should also be required to elucidate and classify the more important figures, — poetic, rhetorical, etc., — and to comment upon their force, clearness, and suitability.

From images, the transition will be natural to the rhythmic expression of the imaginative product. First, the rhythm should be discussed, its nature, swift or slow, heavy or light, involved or simple, monotonous or varied; second, the tonality of the verse and its appropriateness to the movement of the thought, emotion, or action; third, the style and technical designation of the metre and of the stanza, and the fitness of the metrical form. Many lines should be scanned at home; many read in class to illustrate irregularities or peculiarities of verse, and to cultivate the sense of rhythm. Continual reference should be made to the Principles of Poetry.

It is wise that as a mere matter of option for work out of school, or for *occasional* class-work, pupils be encouraged to prepare verses of their own on simple subjects, in the metre of the poem under consideration. The feeling of rhythmic sequence and the appreciation of verse-forms can in no other way, so surely, be developed. For the instructor, an excellent guide to English versification is Professor Alden's *English Verse*.

The pupils familiar with both thought and form of the masterpiece may occasionally be required to reproduce in their own language the passages in which poetic diction most differs from that of prose. This exercise may be conducted orally or by means of carefully written paraphrases of the original. It may, at times, consist of an accurate representation of the thought, description, or narrative, and, at times, of an expansion of the poet's ideas according to the best judgment and taste of the pupil. But the

teacher must always remember that there cannot be more than one sympathetic expression of a poetic thought; or, in other words, that each shade of imaginative thought, feeling, and action has its *appropriate* literary garb. If you destroy or vary the garb, you destroy or vary the impression conveyed. Paraphrasing, therefore, should be employed, if at all, in the schools, not as an insult to the poet's intelligence, formative skill, and inspiration, but as a necessary, though unfortunate, concession to the inexperience of the pupil, as a means to the removal of that necessity, and as an exercise in translation, which, when pupils study Greek and Latin, has little reason for existence. In general, therefore, the advanced pupil should be called upon to paraphrase only when he does not grasp the thought or appreciate the figure. Rather than alter the poet's language, and mutilate the conception, he should commit the language to memory, understanding that to change the original is a crime against the laws of art and of common sense.

These remarks are by no means a protest against the paraphrase as a method of studying grammar, but as a method of studying poetry. In the composition class, the practice of paraphrasing prose and verse is a sure and invaluable aid in enforcing the laws of syntax and in fixing the interpretation of words. In the class that studies poetry, paraphrase is permissible only as a means of exposition, or as a stimulus to invention.

Parallel with this labor of interpretation goes that of criticism, which is always necessary to the appreciation of art. There are three attitudes which the pupil should not assume in respect of classical poems: first, that of regarding them with apathy; second, that of reverencing them without discrimination; third, that of attacking them in a supercilious manner, and with a carping or Philistine spirit.

Patient deliberation and a regard for authority are requisite to criticism. While the pupil may not be sufficiently mature to impugn the verdict by which the poem is declared a classic, he may still be called upon to consider carefully the emotions which the poem has awakened in him, and to inquire into the manner of their awakening. He should, in other words, study the means by which the poet has tried to translate us, for a season, from the dust of this world to the liberal atmosphere of art. He should ask

whether the poet has reproduced nature with fidelity, has planned probable situations, described reasonable characters, portrayed true emotions, exercised wisdom, generosity, and justice in his conception of conduct, chosen the fitting imagery and the inevitable rhythm, welded the parts into a flawless unity, and transfigured the whole with the light that is enduring.

(*d*) Review: During the study of the poem the pupil should keep a note-book, in which are entered, under appropriate headings, passages illustrating qualities of style and thought, as well as information gathered concerning the social, historical, and literary relations of the poem and the poet. This information will be useful in the final characterization of the poem and in composition of essays on special features of the work. After several poems have been read, the note-book should be used as affording materials for comparative study of subjects, methods, and styles.

Upon the instructor devolves the task of weaving the strands of investigation into something of a web. He may well conclude the study of each poem with a brief summary of its qualities *from his point of view*, a comparison with other poems of the same kind, and a statement of its historical and literary importance.

We cannot send this book out without some expression of our obligation to all who have helped in its equipment; but especially to Professor Saintsbury of the University of Edinburgh, whose fresh and readable *Shorter History of English Literature* we have quoted with some frequency; to Professor Skeat of Cambridge for his edition of Chaucer; to Professor Hales for various suggestions adopted from his admirable edition of *Longer English Poems;* to Masson's *Milton*, Bell's *Comus*, and Maccallum's *Tennyson's Idylls and the Arthurian Story*. To other commentaries and editions of classics we are of course indebted, but they are too numerous to mention in detail.

CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY.

BERKELEY, September 10th, 1904.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF POETRY

I. NATURE AND ART

POETRY is one of the arts. Art exists because nature so often is not perfect; and because, even when she does seem to be perfect in form or in color, in sound or in movement, or in the conduct of life, she is limited to the place and the time and the witness. Either we have to leave that which once has pleased us or our fellow-men by its beauty or grandeur, its sublimity, tragic fitness, genial humor, or pathetic charm, or nature herself leaves us; the forms with which she impressed us may change or cease to be, the moods with which we approached and knew her may visit us no more. Art helps man and nature out. It aims to represent nature, when imperfect, as nature apparently would like to represent herself; or to reproduce for man those scenes in nature, those events in life, to awaken those moods and moments of comprehension, by virtue of which he thought he once had grasped the perfect meaning of things, — known the exaltation of ideal delight, felt it supremely. Art aims, also, to express the artist's thought or experience to others, to communicate his feeling and its worth.

The majesty of Mt. Shasta may not be revealed in all its aspects to the artist on any one particular day spent in contemplation of them; the artist may not paint his picture of the mountain until after he has withdrawn from the land that it dominates, but the vision reproduced upon his canvas may still combine in one transfigured whole the thousand fleeting glories and fruitful suggestions gathered from the successive moments when his eyes rested on those heights. He has represented the mountain, not precisely as it is in any changing aspect, more or less imperfect, more or less majestic, or as it may ever be for any one person at any one time, — but as it seemed to try to represent itself to him by various aspects: as it was an inspiration for him in the moods awakened and in the meaning carried away. So art helps nature out. It helps man out by annihilating space and time: by making present what is past, and building here an illusion of what is there. In painting or in verse art may awaken the echo of Roland's bugle blast, so that it again and always shall live in the

pass of Roncesvalles; it may, in engraving, set the academic piles of Oxford and the Gothic towers of Westminster before the boatman on Canadian streams or the cowboy of New Mexico. It may, indeed, do more: rising above the trammels of mere fact it may build sweet villages of the plain, and invest them with the light that never was on sea or land; it may create those who live immortal in verse and in truth, although they lived not actually in life: the Maiden whose purity dissipates the magic wiles of Comus, the burning Porphyro and Madeline "asleep in lap of legends old," the Daniel come to judgment of a Shylock, the Knight "in mightie armes and silver shielde."

Nature and humanity, which is part of nature, rarely reveal their inner meaning to him who glances for a moment upon them, and is gone. Not even to the lover of the meadows and the woods and mountains, does nature always yield her secret. Nor to the wayfarer in the slums of life does she always unveil the heart beating beneath its squalor. Nor to the detective and the prosecuting attorney does she always interpret the romance or the tragedy that closed its career last night in the garret or this morning in the wave beneath the wharf. Nature waits for her interpreter; for the loving and skilful hand that shall brush aside the dust of accidentals under which her true self lies; she awaits the magician who shall touch her when she means most, — arrest her so that for all time she shall remain with us, most beautiful, most affecting, most significant. Art, therefore, consciously represents or modifies nature in order the better to express or suggest her meaning; in order the better to preserve that aspect of nature that means most to the heart as well as the head of the artist. It is a re-creation of nature and all that nature includes, — the world about us, human life and feelings, thought and action, — a re-creation of these not out of the original materials, but out of materials more easy to manipulate, marble or sound or words, and by ways instinct with imagination, ways that appeal to our emotions and set *our* minds to work like artists creating over again what the poet or sculptor or musician has tried to utter.

How Art modifies Nature. — Nature may be modified by man in two ways. First, for purposes of utility, as by the carpenter or blacksmith or machinist, — and the result of their activity we call handicraft; and second, for purposes not practical but ideal, which determine the methods and the aim of art.

The elements of nature which may be modified for the purpose of producing art are somewhat as follows: First, unclassified material, such as the features of the landscape, — earth, trees, water; second, material in the mass, which may be selected and adapted to express the artist's idea, such as wood, metal, ivory, clay, stone; third, color elements in matter, such as pigments, sepia, ochre, white lead; fourth,

matter in vibration, such as strings and membranes under tension, metals, wood, and columns of air, producing sound; fifth, movements of the human body, from which may be produced the ancient, stately art of dancing — that is, choristic — and the imitation of physical characteristics, as upon the stage; and sixth, speech, and the symbols of speech.

As already said, elements of nature may be modified to produce a result which is not directly or evidently useful, but is otherwise valuable in the form of art. How are they modified? First, in their form, or movement, or order, or proportion; as, for instance, when the vibration of the string or of a column of air is skilfully manipulated so as to produce a regulated succession or scale of sounds. This modification of the material is *rhythmic*, and according to a law. In nature there is the simple column of air, as in the reed through which you blow or the string held taut between two points. The sound produced from reed or string has in itself possibilities of measure according to rule; but the rhythm does not appear evidently or regularly until the human mind applies itself to the reduction of these possibilities, these vibrations in accordance with some purpose manifesting itself by the recurrence of pitch or intensity or length. Now this regulated movement or *rhythm* — for such it is — will take various forms according to the material in which it finds manifestation. It may appear as harmony in the chord, or periodic recurrence in the verse of poetry, or melody in the strain of music, or proportion in the outlines of a statue or a cathedral; in fact, as unity in the variety of details, unity ruling the parts of the mass, law fulfilling itself in the modes of that which appeared to be unregulated freedom, and in the adoption of sufficient material, and not more than sufficient nor less, to the end designed.

In the second place, the elements of nature may be manipulated in *imitation* of natural objects; one natural object may be manipulated in imitation of another, as a stone is chiselled in order to imitate the human form or the form of an animal. This process of modifying nature we find frequently employed in such poetry as attempts to reproduce natural sounds. We find it, also, in the lower kinds of music, in music which represents or reproduces the fact, — as of the concourse of human beings in the well-known Carnival of Venice, where shrieks of joy, laughter, and surprise are heard, and the squeaking of the wry-necked fife. The result of slavish imitation is art of a vulgar kind, such as delights the audience in a music hall; it is the art of an unidealized portrait, or of the snapshot taken by the kodak in the hands of the amateur.

Rhythm. — Rhythm and imitation are modes necessarily at the basis of all art. Rhythm, because it is the measure, whether appearing as regular recurrence, or proportion, or harmony, of all movement and form, of all sights and sounds, thoughts, actions, and feelings that

art can imitate. Imitation, because, as we shall soon see, without it art could have no root in reality, and imagination would not exist.

In all motion, whether of the stars in their courses or of the earth about the sun and the moon about the earth, in all succession of day and night, of the seasons, of flood tide and ebb, of waves, whether of sea, or sound, or light, the mind of man discerns an order, — the recurrence of an emphasis at regular intervals, — an order, in short, that rules the manner of the movement. This is rhythm. It is the law by which all things *flow*, the principle by which many various happenings or particulars in any series are bound together and related to a common purpose. It is not only the unity which we observe running through a variety of external movement, it is also the principle by which our senses are able to group the various particulars and arrange them in order with a common meaning. And that is because the rhythms of the world outside us affect the waking and the sleeping, the life and growth of man himself. We live in the rhythm of the universe because we are part of it; and if we fulfil the purpose of our being, if we exercise our functions to the best result, it is because we are living in harmony with the courses of nature: have reduced to a minimum the friction between our own way and the great way of nature, by observing rhythm. by "keeping time." It is inherent in man's nature to "keep time." We are so constituted in body that alternation of effort, recurrence at regular intervals, are the law of our everyday existence: rest follows activity, dilatation of muscles succeeds contraction, — pulsation, breathing, walking; speech, — all are rhythmical.

The mind, too, acts rhythmically. Now we are attentive to an object; in a moment the attention flies to some other interest, then back again to the former thought. Flying and perching and flying ever again. But every succession of sights or sounds, of feelings or thoughts, that affects us we involuntarily divide into a number of smaller groups, each of which has its own emphatic and subordinate elements; and the law of emphasis is the same throughout. We find in the series a recurrence of emphasis, whether of brightness or loudness or intensity or significance, at regular intervals, — a rhythm. And until we have found the rhythm in, or given a rhythm to, any series of happenings, it has no meaning for us. Into the monotonous and unmeaning *clack*, *clack*, *clack* of the railway carriage as it moves you may read a rhythmical *clickety-clack*, *clickety-clack;* I may read *click-a-click-a-click-a-click;* or perhaps we may agree. Our agreement as to the rhythmical group into which the sounds fall depends upon whether we are similarly attuned. In either case the individual demands a recurrence at regular intervals of an accented sound, which shall diversify and relieve the monotonous succession of level beats that he actually hears. This relation of the

accented sound to the unaccented constitutes the principle of each rhythmical group, and the principle or rhythm remains the same for all the groups in any series which your ear has made artistic. Now having read a rhythm into or out of the beats, you will unconsciously proceed to read a meaning out of the rhythm, a "hop-step-and-jump" or a "dot and carry one" of motion, or perhaps even a verse of more or less sense or nonsense, such as: —

> "Clickety-clack,
> Sit on your back,
> I'm the tornado that gobbles the track;"

or a song like that of Kipling's *Empire State Express*: —

> "She climb upon der shteeple
> Und she frighten all der people
> Singin' michnai — ghignai — shtingal! Yah! Yah!"

Rhythm is a principle guiding not only the motion of substance and action, feeling and thought, but the measure of form as well. The name is not ordinarily applied to the principle in all these manifestations, but it might be. In the world of form rhythm appears as symmetry or proportion; it is the harmony of curves which we admire in the statue of Venus of Milo; it is the harmony of form and of color in Rafael's painting of the Sistine Madonna; it is the proportion of mass and pillar and arch and spire in the Cathedral of Milan. These partake quite as fully of the nature of rhythm as the unified variety of tones, measures, chords, and motives in Handel's oratorio of *The Creation*, or the swinging phrases with their recurring accents, and the progressive stanzas, of Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality*. Rhythm of the feelings shows itself in the passage from elation to depression, from ecstatic enjoyment to satiety, from satiety to apathy, from laughter to tears. Our thoughts, too, — not only do they move rhythmically toward the conclusion that they would reach, but each is in itself a rhythmical record of the relation between him who thinks and that of which he thinks. The rhythm of family is in the love that holds it together; the rhythm of action is in the purpose that links desire to attainment. Rhythm is the law of the Presence

> "In the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

By rhythm poetry aims to represent the law according to which nature moves and lives; it tries to catch the accent of the whirlwind or the storm and to reproduce that in the sweep and thunder of the poetic

line; to find measured expression for "beauty born of murmuring sound and thoughts that lie too deep for tears."

Rhythm is a fundamental mode of art, not merely because it aims to catch and reproduce the accent of movement and form, and of the very *being* that is imitated by art, but because it regulates, also, all communication between individual and individual, because it is the common measure in which people march together, act together, and above all, feel together. It is the common pulse of the crowd, which, set to beating by song, or speech, or strain of music, or sight of beauty, or wave of heroism or of fear, moves the individuals in sympathy, makes their hearts vibrate as one. Art, by virtue of that same mode of movement and of form, by rhythm consciously applied, orders and emphasizes the rhythms of nature and offers to us her semblances so set to a tune that not one, but all, may feel and understand, — is therefore a common benefactor. Since this tune, moreover, is that which all naturally sing, art is an interpreter, communicator, mediator. By her means, men, as members of society, are most readily brought to appreciate the universal, ideal and abiding characteristics of mankind. In the family, in business, in politics, and in religion the interests and beliefs of individuals continually and necessarily clash; but because art depends upon the consent of many to the common measure, the common proportion or rhythm, the enjoyment derived from her is not a matter of selfish interest. Those who enjoy, enjoy the accepted rhythm; those who do not, are not in the artistic or poetic mood. Consequently mankind has from the beginning acknowledged that taste or feeling; that is to say, the *general* taste or feeling, and not judgment, that is to say, the *individual* judgment, is the arbiter in art. But mankind concedes that the individual has a right to his preference as to whether he shall join the artistic mood of the crowd or not. "Concerning tastes," the proverb goes, "it is useless to dispute." Not "concerning taste" as generally approved, but "tastes" of individuals who stand aloof. Concerning the accepted taste it is unnecessary to dispute; concerning individual tastes useless, — because the work of art, the painting, oratorio, statue, colonnade, or poem is, after all, not nature but art; not an accidental or merely practical, but an ideal reality; not dependent for its success upon its ability to convince, but to delight; not limited in its appeal to one person or coterie or age, but the more enjoyable in proportion as it may be enjoyed by the more who see or hear it. For art is eminently social. It teaches its lesson, if lesson it teach, by moving alike those who will be moved — harps whose strings are accorded to its rhythm. The artist enhances his own joys and abates his own sorrows by communicating them: that is one impulse for producing art. Another is that he desires to express himself in terms more

widely and swiftly and surely understood than the practical; more sympathetically understood — therefore terms æsthetic and ideal. Another is that he wishes to people the world with creations, with images made in his own likeness, each presenting in apparently real but actually ideal form some aspect of himself, so that it may make acquaintances on its own account and perpetuate his personality. For all these reasons art presupposes an audience and a community of appreciation. If the rhythm of the masterpiece does not sweep you out of the consideration of practical and particular details into the realm of enjoyment, then for you it is not a work of art. Since you do not talk the same language with those who speak of it as a semblance — as a day-dream quicker with glory than the day with gold — you are not speaking a language that the lovers of that art can understand. You are regarding it as an actuality, better or worse than the world has already offered for such and such a price, and if you criticise it, your criticism is worth while only from the business point of view, not as criticism of art.

Imitation. — Imitation also is a mode fundamental and necessary to art and to its power over mankind. By its means, man makes his earliest attempts to communicate to others the experience of his senses, and by practising it he ultimately discovers that he can create something new, something that his senses may in no particular time or place have entirely experienced. Even when imitation is slavish, it works with a certain originality, for in copying an object it generally copies that object in a material different from the actual. When primitive man desires to make a representation of some new monster, he employs not a similar material, save in so far as he imitates in his person, by gesture; he betakes himself to reproduction in materials foreign to the monster — to charcoal and cave walls, and so by lines and curves he perpetuates his experience in a medium that is original and a form that is, if in ever so slight a degree, imaginative. He imitates, but at the same time translates. When imitation has outgrown its swaddling clothes, when it ceases to copy, as the savage and the child would, exactly what it has seen or heard or felt, and begins to modify, select, improvise, it assumes the robe and wand of a magician: it is no longer realism: it is romance. It reproduces no longer the duplicate of the original, the memory image: not so much the likeness of the externals that were seen as of the mood, quality, and essence of the impression made upon the beholder; it reproduces not so much for the sake of recording or communicating a particular happening as of creating, for the sheer pleasure of creating, a semblance with life of its own and associations in an imaginary world — an embodiment all the more entertaining and real because not fettered to that which was observed and registered in memory. The sordid Rome that Byron

saw becomes for him the Niobe of Nations; the liberty trodden under foot is enthroned — the eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind. Imitation is transfigured by creative power until it presents an embodiment not of externals alone but of thoughts and emotions, of that which has no physical form, but lives in symbols that suggest it. Of Imitation, careful about much serving, the beautiful daughter Imagination is sprung, to be in her turn the creative mother of Art. Memory fades and the records of it, but Imagination revels in ever reviving and richer colors.

Structure. — Besides the mode of imitation (which has in view the object to be represented) and the mode of rhythm (which is the regulation by mind of the natural movement or measure of the object represented), there is also another mode by which art proceeds in its manipulation of nature, namely, the *structural*. This varies with the material in which the art works, and with the conditions and laws of the particular material. The architect and the sculptor must comply with the conditions of the mass that they use: the free-stone, the granite, the marble, wood, brass, or iron. The painter must consider the nature and possibilities of his pigments and the surface on which they are to be laid. The musician and the poet must study and conform to the qualities of sound: one as pure and telling its own tale, the other as formed into words and symbols.

2. THE PURPOSES OF THE ARTIST

We are now ready to understand the purposes for which the artist thus modifies nature. He must make his attempt with one or more of three ends in view, to display its structure, to present its meaning, or to represent its objects. And if he succeed in all of these attempts, he is the master-artist: craftsman, seer, and creator in one.

Structural Art. — The artist modifies nature structurally in order to reveal or interpret the significance of the material in which he works, significance which in a state of nature had been unobserved. He liberates, emphasizes, and adjusts the properties of his material. The stone, just quarried, appears devoid of symmetry or interest, but the architect who will use it knows better. He regards it as a something within which two forces are locked in conflict, — an individuality held together by the equipoise of the gravity and the rigidity within it. The force of gravity would tend to draw the several molecules downward; the force of rigidity would tend to an opposite effect; the two forces strike a balance and the stone results. As a rock beetles above you in its natural state and place, you do not usually regard it as a petrified battleground. But the architect who would work with that material must so modify it as to utilize the antagonistic forces each in turn;

must so manipulate the stone as to bring out the essential balance between its upward and downward proclivities. He first gives free play to its rigidity, in column and parallel column. When the fitting time comes, he brings the other proclivity of the stone, its gravity, into play: the columns curve toward each other, and gradually the arch appears which finally culminates in the keystone. You derive pleasure from the contemplation of this artifice in stone because, even though without reflection, you have beheld the manipulation and composition in regulated order of the two forces that rule. So also the engineer in water, arranging his artificial Niagaras, brings into harmony or balance the fluidity and gravity of the material with which he works. Every art, music and poetry like the rest, manipulates nature so as to reveal the significance of the material, whether mass, color, sound, or symbol of speech, in which it works. Poetry, of course, could not result from the use of the structural method alone. Nursery rhymes, and nonsense verses of great beauty, like Lewis Carroll's —

> "'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
> Did gyre and gimble in the wabe,"

show how far structural art may go unaided in the realm of language.

Presentative Art. — The artist may, in the second place, present some idea, principle, or characteristic, not of the material used, but of the mind using; that is to say, he may present the nature of himself. This he does by suggestion, using the materials in such a way as to awaken in the beholder or listener his own moods or imaginings. If music confined itself to the previous method of construction, erecting palaces of sound by seizing the underlying principles and varieties of stress, quantity, pitch, and quality, harmonizing them in the chord, and prolonging them in pleasant but meaningless sequences, it would be of a merely structural or mathematical nature. But it does much more than this, when by means of the architecture of sound it suggests moods of the human soul such as the musician himself has felt, and which each auditor may interpret according to his acquaintance with the art or his kinship with the mood. In this case the presentative method makes use of the structural method, and so far as it may please, of imitation as well; but for higher purposes than either alone could achieve. The rhythmic qualities of structure are subordinated to a meaning; the imitation of natural sounds, if it exist, has become ideal and creative in proportion as it has become imaginative. So in all art, — in lyric poetry, for instance, where the singer indulges not in mere imitations or descriptions of natural sights or sounds but in semblances of them, as hints and images to express his moods and the aspects of life that have appealed to him. He advances still further in the poetic ascent

when he succeeds in presenting views of life rather than of his personal mood. Then he begins to be a seer, a prophet. In this richer and nobler sense, the *Tintern Abbey* and the *Ode on Immortality* are presentative. They are the climax of presentative poetry, poetry where self passes out of sight, and life finds a spiritual interpreter. Much of our best lyrical poetry, however, is purely presentative of the mood of the singer: for instance, Shelley's —

> "I arise from dreams of thee
> In the first sweet sleep of night,"

where the winds and stars and champak odors exist merely to reflect a personal passion; or Burns's —

> "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon
> How can ye bloom sae fair."

Such poetry may be very beautiful, but it is prone to fall into what Ruskin styles the *pathetic fallacy*, because nature is wrested out of her rights to a seeming sympathy with man's little joys and griefs.

Representative Art. — As art, when it is merely structural or presentative, is not at its highest, so also when it depends upon imitation alone. Poetry, for instance, that should give a literal description of a butterfly, or a mere catalogue of events, would hardly be poetry. But when imitation rises above the servile copy and represents life as seen and constructed imaginatively, it has reached the goal predestined. The representative artist modifies the actual object: he tells us not all that it was, but what it is to him, or might be. He gives us, by a few master strokes, the impression which nature made upon him, the meaning that nature had for him; he proceeds by choosing, re-collecting, and combining characteristic particulars which reproduce no one definite original, but a creative image, a typical representative of the salient ideas or qualities that he desires to portray. If Andrea del Sarto paints Madonnas from his wife without idealizing her, — in so far he fails. Michelangelo reproduces the universal, not the particular, beauty; Rafael, the eternal motherhood. Shakespeare does not derive his Brutus wholly from the historical personage of that name, but from him and others who possessed, or might have possessed, similar spirit or qualities. He does not in his *Macbeth* or *Othello* record events as they came to his hand in Holinshed or Cinthio; he selects, reorders, combines, constructs, — produces that which is more than a duplicate of nature: a living thing. So representative poetry, just like presentative, may pass into a higher style, or shall we say into its own highest, — namely, the creative. Chaucer is a representative poet, Shakespeare, a creative.

Interpretative and Creative Art. — When the artist is at his best, and here we are thinking especially of the poet, he at one and the same time interprets the significance of life in its broad, enduring, and spiritual aspect, and creates characters who live the life. He is Prophet or Seer, and also Maker. He sends forth his creatures as realities to move up and down among us, Cæsars, Shylocks, Orlandos, Desdemonas, Ophelias, Portias, significant in the glow of that eternity whose touch is art.

3. THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE ARTS

The arts may be classified in many ways, but here we shall consider them, very briefly, according to the mode of their manifestation, the material that they use, their respective capability of expression, and the senses to which they severally appeal.

As to the mode, some represent nature at rest, and may be called arts of space; others represent nature in movement, and may be called arts of time. The former are architecture, sculpture, and painting; the latter are the art of dancing as it was elaborately practised by the ancients, the art of music, and that of poetry.

Somewhat akin to this classification is that according to the material used. Architecture and sculpture present material of three dimensions; painting, however, is less fettered, since it employs for its representations the plane or surface, that is to say, two dimensions. The plastic arts, sculpture and painting, since they deal with material at rest, are limited to the portrayal of a momentary scene, but that of course should be significant, looking before and after, and sufficient, so that we do not weary of it because guessing at the outcome. The arts, on the other hand, which use for their material motions and sounds, following each other in time, as music, acting, and the literature of recital and song, should aim to present events or emotions as they follow each other in order. They deal preferably and properly with the progress of that which they portray. They may, of course, describe details lying side by side in space, but they should, if possible, describe them as they have progressively affected the spectator.

If we classify the arts according to the grade and scope of thought or life that each may express, we find, but I cannot discuss the reasons, that the order runs upward somewhat thus: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry. In music the artist presents not material structure, like architecture, nor the forms of natural or human life, like painting and sculpture, but the soul divested of the tangible: the conflict of moods, its progression and resolution, the history of emotions, — all in terms of sound, of melody, of harmony, of graduated intervals. Poetry, that is to say lyric, reflective, narrative, and the dra-

matic, when read, may, like music, suggest emotional moods and movements by sequences and variations of sound; like sculpture and painting it may represent living beings at strife or in concord: but it does this, not by means of the actual and concrete, but by constructing an ideal world out of words and images, that is to say, out of symbols. The words must be translated by the understanding of the hearer, and images by the imagination; therefore, to appreciate poetry at all, one must exercise a certain logical and poetic faculty not required in every case by the other arts. Poetry, therefore, stands very high in the hierarchy of the arts. Drama, when it is acted, adds, moreover, to poetry other charms, those of sculpture, painting, and pantomime; the spectacle of human form, moving, speaking, and acting.

If we classify arts according to the senses to which they appeal, it will be seen that products of artifice, such as articles prepared for the palate, and perfumes, are so closely allied with physical needs and uses as to be practically beyond the pale. Architecture has, like the handicrafts, its utility in the practical world, but, appealing to the perception of mass and distance and to vision, it delights the higher and more delicately organized taste as well. Sculpture appeals both to the sense of touch and that of sight; painting to the sight, but by way of both form and color; music to hearing and the perception of movement; poetry directly to hearing, the sense of movement, and sight, and, by the medium of imagination, to these and all other senses as well.

4. LITERATURE IN GENERAL

It will be evident from what has been said that all arts are one in this: they aim to express the thought of man by some modification of the materials in which man works. They differ in the materials which they use, the modes of manifestation, the ideals which they are able to convey, and the senses to which they appeal. A distinction was drawn in a previous paragraph between the handicrafts modifying natural material for purely practical purposes, like carpentering or tailoring, and the arts adapting nature not for purposes of practical utility but the better to express its meaning or to suggest the meaning of life. Of course, in a broad sense the term "art" is frequently applied both to handicrafts — the industrial arts, — and to the fine arts, for all of these are alike, in that they modify nature according to a conscious purpose. Some of the latter, however, even though they have the possibilities of fine art, like architecture and landscape gardening, may in a degree be also subservient to purposes of utility; and to the industrial arts painting and sculpture may be allied by practical uses, as in house decoration; while music may lend itself to assist the march of soldiers in battle or the progress of pleasure at a dinner. But when the fine arts flourish in

their perfection, when the thought expressed is not of physical need or comfort, but an ideal clothed in the only form that for it is inherent, rhythmic, and articulate, — and when this ideal so made manifest evokes unselfish emotion and fires the free imagination, there is no question of the difference between handicraft and art.

Practical Literature. — Literature may in general be defined as the product of thought in language committed to permanent form by writing. It is in the broad sense inclusive of all works of the kind, whether of actual or spiritual import, practical or artistic form; but when it consists of mere records and the communication of facts, as in reports, official papers, the journals of the day, business correspondence, text-books, or historical or scientific publications intended to disseminate information, it is a handicraft.

Belles Lettres. — Literature begins to enter the realm of fine art when it gives expression to thoughts and feelings about the ideal interests of mankind, and that in a form which stimulates the imagination and interests the feelings. The literature of scientific discovery, when conveyed with artistic arrangement and inviting style, as in the writings of Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley, the literature of history as presented by Thucydides or Gibbon, or of philosophy as in the dialogues of Plato, or of politics as reviewed by Macaulay, the oratory of Burke and Webster and Phillips Brooks, the critical essays of Matthew Arnold and Lowell, — these are all artistic, even though the purpose be to instruct or to convince. For the inspiring qualities of the material, whether ethical, political, scientific, or religious, and the charm of manner and style with which it is presented, as well as the appeal made to the imaginative and creative faculty of the reader and to his feelings, combine to lift the literature of purpose into the realm of ideal enjoyment where art resides and controls. The rhythm of the language in such artistic literature of purpose is of the flowing, variable, natural kind, appropriate to prose, — a rhythm not yet held in restraint by the metrical laws which govern verse. In proportion, however, as the attempt is to win the interest of the reader, not simply by the instructiveness of its material but by the manner of the presentation, the product is more or less entitled to rank as Fine, Polite, or Artistic Literature, — *Belles Lettres*.

Pure or Creative Literature. — When the author, proceeding a step further, selects a subject no longer of practical or particular nature, but transfigured by imagination, or imaginatively constructed, and when he presents this with conscious elaboration, in order that the appeal may be directly to the imagination of his readers and the emotions that delight in the ideal, his production is Pure or Creative Literature. The form of his writing may retain the larger rhythms of natural speech,

as in prose drama, or it may adopt the more highly and delicately organized vesture of verse, — rhythm regulated by metre, and by the accord of word-sounds in tone, sequence, and rhyme. The latter is Poetry Proper, — ballad, lyric, epic, drama, idyl, pastoral, reflective poem, elegy, or masque, as the case may be.

5. POETRY PROPER

Verse and Prose. — It is not the use of verse alone, — that is to say, metrically arranged rhythm, — that constitutes poetry; prose, such as that of everyday speech, and verse as we know it in metres, rhymes, and stanzas, are merely instruments, and they may be used indifferently by literature of the instructive kind or by the literature of the imagination. But as a rule, poetry, since it treats of ideal thought in a highly imaginative way and for the purpose of appealing to the higher feelings of man, finds its appropriate expression in that highly organized rhythm governed by metrical laws which is called verse. For this organized rhythm is exquisitely fitted to awaken the muscular and nervous rhythms of the human organization and to correspond to their pulsation, their swing, so to speak, when they are under the influence of emotion. In other words, the rhythm of sound and that of exalted feeling speak the same tongue. Prose is naturally the language of communication; verse, of emotion, or of imagination under the control of emotion. Poetry, or, as the word means, creation, differs from the material and product of everyday communication in that it implies supreme and concentrated imaginative and emotive effort; it expresses itself most readily in the pulsation and swing of sensitive, rhythmical, and highly accentuated utterance, such as we call verse. Everybody will concede to poetry a superior simplicity and imaginative concreteness, compactness, emotive force, and capability to be remembered over the literature expressed in prose; but superiority in these respects would explain poetry only as a higher kind of prose. It would establish a difference of degree, to be sure, but upon an altogether false basis. Poetry is neither heightened prose nor any other degree of prose. It is different in its nature, and it calls for a different medium of expression.

Prose and verse are, as I have said, merely instruments. They may both of them be instruments of poetry; and on that account creative fiction and creative drama, even though in prose, are ordinarily called poetical, and poetical they certainly may be. But verse, because it is nearer akin and more sensitive to the ebb and flow of emotion, is still the appropriate instrument for the literature that is totally emotional and imaginative, namely, poetry. If we take the thought of a poem and turn it into prose, as, for instance, the thought of Wordsworth's

Ode on Immortality, it may afford the pleasure of a *poetical* statement of philosophical theory, but it will no longer afford the pleasure of *poetry*. The charm, therefore, of the poem was largely dependent upon the verse form. But not entirely, for lines which have rhythm, rhyme, and metrical form, but no thought whatever, like the "counting" verses

> "'Intry, mintry, kewtry, corn,
> Apple-seed and apple-thorn,
> Wire, brier, limber-lock, —
> Three geese in a flock:
> One flew east and one flew west,
> And one flew over the cuckoo's nest,"

may answer every requirement of verse and gratify the ear, and yet not afford the delight peculiar to poetic verse. Indeed, the delight afforded falls below that which is derived from rhythmical prose; such, for instance, as that with which Carlyle concludes his account of the pathetic fate of a princess slaughtered in the French revolution: —

> "She was beautiful; she was good: she had known no happiness."

And after all, if we pause after "good," that prose rhythm falls into two trochaic-dactylic tetrameters well suited to a thought, itself poetically conceived.

Poetry defined. — The charm of poetry is, then, not alone in its verse, nor alone in the images created or in the emotions awakened. Its intrinsic quality cannot be apprehended by any such analysis of the whole into its apparently component parts. Poetry delights us because of the consummate skill with which an imaginative thought of evident significance is wedded with the rhythmic, preferably metrical, form appropriate to the emotion suggested by the subject. The product stirs us with a rhythmic pulsation conformable to the mood that the poet himself has experienced.

From the point of view of the *subject and the form*, poetry may be defined as the imaginative and emotive expression or suggestion of that which has significance, in the rhythmical and preferably metrical medium of language appropriate to the subject. From the point of view of the *purpose*, it is an imaginative attempt, by means of rhythmical, and preferably metrical, language, to awaken emotions in the reader or hearer that correspond to the mood of the poet himself.

6. THE CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Practical literature aims, then, to convince or instruct its readers; it deals with facts as they are, or with reasons; it appeals to the intellect and the will: it would have us know and do. If it express itself at all

in imaginative form or with emotion, these are secondary to the main purpose. The literature of art, or *belles lettres*, on the other hand, while it deals with some significant event, object, thought, feeling, or ideal, does not exist for the sole purpose of imparting this material to another, and the highest reach of *belles lettres*, namely poetry, does not exist for that purpose at all. It cannot help conveying thought; but its aim is not communication. It is creation. Out of words and measures the poet builds something to embody and perpetuate his mood, interest, or ideal. In that which he makes, his vision stands forth a reality, to be enjoyed as if it drew the breath of nature, by himself and by those who come into touch with it. The Macbeths, Guineveres, Tam o' Shanters of literature live of their own right. Lyrics and songs of passion are similarly their own justification; in them poet and world find sympathetic relief of sorrow and enhancement of joy. As a good man may influence mankind to nobility by his mere presence, so may a good drama. But its right to existence is not in any lesson with which it may be fraught; it is — like that of any other living thing — in its own personality and the personalities that it introduces to the world. If, then, poetry has a purpose, it is to impress people and move them by what it seems and is, not by what it would teach or preach. It must be clothed in language, simple, lucid, vivid; it must use words that stir the senses, words which have the pictorial quality that characterized language when first it was coined; words that make sounds, sights, odors, tastes, and mental experiences live for the inner sense which we call imagination; words, too, that go home to the feelings.

Poetic Diction. — On this account poetry frequently indulges in archaic or obsolescent forms of speech, for these recall the simpler days when words had more direct and explicit meaning than now. It colors plain words with adjectives and epithets that emphasize the characteristic of the original. It tries to fill the words of every day with richer associations, or with new and exquisite significance. It aims to excite and exalt the emotions by condensing, so far as possible, the form of expression; by omitting needless particles, conjunctions, and the like; by framing compounds the more effective because of their naïve or audacious novelty. It contrives arrangements of phrase and clause which, while they appear to be departures from the ordinary, are conscious reversions to the natural and unconscious speech of mankind in moments of emotion. All these devices of vocabulary lend color and iridescence to the illusion with which poetry clothes itself. For, like all art, poetry, while it pictures reality, pictures it under the shadow of a dream. Because we know that the picture and the poem, the novel and the drama, present not the thing itself but a transfigured thing, we lend ourselves the more readily to an unprejudiced, and therefore properly sympathetic,

appreciation and contemplation of the beauty of the transfiguration and the worth of the thing transfigured. This is the imaginative attitude essential to the appreciation of art. Goethe's dictum that art is art because it is not nature, is intelligible only if we interpret "*not* nature" to mean "not mere nature but more." Poetry has the heart of nature but the garments of a God; and so she woos us to gaze and wins us to understand. By her exterior of diction and verse she appeals to the senses. That way prepared, she startles the reader with a vision of something concrete, something that gains light and warmth by the working of his own imagination and that forthwith sets also his feelings aflame.

The Image-making Process. — Let us for a moment consider the nature of the impressions or images by means of which poetry presents to us facts, feelings, and thoughts that are worthy of consideration. We are brought into connection with external things in everyday life through the medium of our senses. The muscular sense gives us sensations of movement and resistance, of heat and cold. Taste, smell, and touch contribute sensations, each in its own kind and degree; hearing is an avenue for sounds, their intensity, quality, and endurance; sight reveals light and darkness, form and color. These sensations do not of themselves give us knowledge of the objects which produce them. They are rather the raw material out of which we may construct that knowledge. It is only when we have traced sensations of color, odor, form, and taste to their source in a given object, say an apple, that we have knowledge of the object that has yielded them; only when we have traced a sensation of light to its cause that we know the lantern whence it issued. We thus *perceive*, that is to say, *grasp thoroughly and hold as one*, the raw materials of sensation and the objects themselves of which the color, form, and light were attributes or qualities. This process of knowing things is *perception*, and the result obtained by the mind is called a *percept*. When the sensation is first experienced, the mind is only very slightly at work, — almost passive, only vaguely attentive. As soon, however, as it attempts to trace to its particular source the impression made by the ray of light upon the eye, it begins to work; when it identifies the lantern, it begins to know. The next time that a similar impression of light is presented to the eye, the mind will be quicker to perceive the cause; it will also recollect the impressions produced by the former occurrence, — the appearance and the touch, perhaps, of the lantern. This second time, therefore, perception not only grasps what is directly presented to the mind; it also groups about the present impression pictures remembered from the earlier experience.

The Memory Image. — These pictures, or impressions of a percept retained after it has itself departed, are *images*. The apple with its

form, taste, color, may be recalled to mind, because its image abides in memory. The memory is, therefore, a faculty by which we are able to imagine, or reconstruct a copy of, that which was formerly perceived. It is a kind of imagination, not the only kind, but the simplest. It is reproduction of that which once existed for the mind, though now both time and place may be different. Memory, moreover, will reproduce, not simply the apple that you plucked, but the tree from which you plucked it, the hour of day, and so forth. It associates the special object of perception with objects or events that attended it — all in the same image: just as a photographic plate preserves not only the person photographed, but the background. Still more interesting is the fact that if the background, that tree, for instance, is brought to notice, the mind will at once reconstruct the image also of the man who stood before it. The memory, or reproductive imagination, associates impressions that have been made together in time or place: to remember one is to remember another that lay close by in the original experience. The association depends here upon physical *connection*. But the association works, also, by *comparison:* either of things similar, — we recall a voice like one that we at present hear; or of things dissimilar, — the rain of to-day may remind us of the sunshine of yesterday.

The Memory-image in Poetry. — Now these images reproduced or derived from an experience are of as many kinds as there are physical senses. Those that came originally through the eye are visual; those that came through the ear, auditory; and so on, — gustatory, tactile, etc. It stands to reason that the poet who varies his appeal to the senses, by varying the kind and degree of images widely and skilfully, increases his chance of attracting and holding the interest of the reader. Though this reproductive imagery is, as I have said, not the highest product of imagination, there is poetry of a fascinating and therefore excellent kind which, so far as imagery is concerned, uses little else — the poetry of the older ballad, for instance. This depends for its charm largely upon a vivid and varied series of memory-images, unmodified and unadorned, — either the direct recollection of an experience, or images of connection, similarity, or contrast, associated with it. I do not mean that in such verse the *language* is not adorned. I say merely that the *images* are plain, unvarnished copies of a recollection or an imagined recollection of this, that, and the other scene or event, emotion, or ideal. The language may and does abound in rhetorical or logical charms, but purely rhetorical or logical, not poetic or creative as well. By rhetorical charms I mean those figures which are peculiarly and exclusively concerned with the arrangement of speech: exclamation, interrogation, aposiopesis, inversion, balance, antithesis, repetition, climax, and anticlimax; and by the logical I mean a number of figures,

not to be confused with the rhetorical, which depend upon the artistic manipulation of some device of thought, logical or rather sophistical: hyperbole, innuendo, irony, oxymoron, euphemism, and prolepsis. Of these figures of speech and reason I shall have more to say later. They are the common stock of all expression — merely adventitious in their service to poetry. The ballads, to return to my statement, depend for their success largely upon the use of memory-images and the charm of rhetorical and logical device. Such also is the case with Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* and most of Sir Walter Scott's metrical romances. In the following stanza from the *Horatius* the images are all primary; that is to say, not worked over by any higher imaginative process — each set by the other fresh from the mint of memory: —

> "The harvests of Arretium,
> This year, old men shall reap;
> This year, young boys in Umbro
> Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
> And in the vats of Luna,
> This year, the must shall foam
> Round the white feet of laughing girls
> Whose sires have marched to Rome."

The pictures are simple, but numerous, natural, and vivid. The mere recollection of richly colored scenes is pleasing; much more so, however, because narrated with rhetorical skill: with due distribution of the component parts, with repetition and climax. So far as imagination goes, *Horatius* is principally a vivid representation of images that, if experienced in real life, would move our feelings by their simplicity and fervor, and that still more move when apparently remembered by the minstrel, and recited in a season of tranquillity with all the focussing of emotional effect and dramatic coloring that manner and order can contribute.

Figures: (1) **The Created Image or the Figure of Poetry.** — But images may be more vivid and suggestive when they are not recollected or primary; when they are the representation of facts or fancies selected, modified, rearranged, constructed into something new both in idea and expression; when they bring before us not simple "day-break," but "incense-breathing Morn" or "the opening eyelids of the Dawn"; not the plain impression of a melody that is sad, but of "music yearning like a God in pain." When images illuminate and color the impression received from experience with the riches of associated memory or of fancy supposed to be remembered, then they live not only by virtue of their own significance, but of their relation to things similar or surrounding, in time, place, or thought.* The memory-image "morn" and the poetic or created image "incense-breathing"

by their conjunction mutually confer life. Not only is incense-breathing Morn a personality, she is herself capable of suggesting accompanying moods and characteristics of life; she sets the reader to creating. The melody played in minor key is a primary or recollected image, so the moaning of one in pain; but when the music *yearns like a God* in pain, each member of the comparison thrills with the spirit of the other; and their communion represents more than the addition of the parts.

These created and creative images are sometimes called figures of speech; but since that term has been vaguely extended over two other wide and wholly different modes of expression, *viz.* devices of rhetorical arrangement and devices of logical subtlety, we had better discriminate the mode of which we now are speaking by applying a more specific name: figures of poetry. Figures of rhetoric and figures of logical artifice are common to prose as well as to poetry, and of them we shall speak later.

Definition. — Created images, or figures of poetry, express one object, condition or action, in terms of, or by the aid of, another. By poetic imagery the lightning "leaps." In this case, by analogy with animal motion an attribute is transferred to the inanimate which appears to give it life. This transfiguration of a thought by placing it in solution with another so that a salt, of which each alone was incapable, results from the reaction — a salt which is the meaning and essence of both, — might better pass as *figured speech* than as a figure of speech. It focusses in the image the artistic interest of the environment. It is not a mere mode or arrangement of words; it is a something created, an individuality. The ancient and much abused term *trope* indicates the method of the poetic transfiguration. A trope is a turning of the words concerned from their ordinary to an extraordinary service, namely, to express the thought or picture of the object, not in its simplicity, but as coloring, or colored by, related or surrounding objects.

Figures of Comparison: the Same, the Like, the Unlike. — The metaphor is based upon resemblance in the ordinary world of life and thought: as when Byron calls the lonely and the outcast "orphans of the heart"; so, also, is the simile, — as when he says of fallen Rome, "A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay." In the *Metaphor*, however, the identity of the "lonely" with the "orphan" is assumed; and the image is stated in terms entirely of the object that seemed similar, not "the lonely *like* orphans of the heart," but merely "*the* orphans of the heart must turn to thee." In the *Simile*, on the other hand, not the identity but the likeness of the objects is assumed: the comparison is more elaborate, and both sides of it are expressed. Provided only the object of comparison and the thing compared are placed at the same time before us, it is not essential to a simile that the resem-

blance be stated as above with a preliminary *like* or *as*. The likeness may be expressed by an *is* or *are*, or by an apposition — "O Rome, my country, . . . lone mother of dead empires." Here Rome is likened to a mother: a simile is implied; but the simile itself contains a metaphor in the term "dead empires."

Personification is ordinarily regarded as a distinct form of the poetic figure; but it is in essence merely that species of metaphor which expresses abstractions or inanimate things in terms of things animate.

> "Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
> By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
> Were in the flat sea sunk,"

contains a personification of Virtue seeing and doing; but the attribution of life to Virtue is not different in method from the attribution of light in the next line; they are both metaphors. So also the personification of "empires" as "dead," in the quotation from *Childe Harold* given above. There is, evidently, a difference of degree between the trope, or figure of poetry, that respects the limitations of time and distance and what is known as common sense, and the trope that ignores the conditions of actuality, oversteps them and walks as if in a dream-world where ideas have forms, where the inanimate lives, where past, present, and future are as one, and the absent may be summoned into presence with a wave of the poet's wand. Personification, when it assumes the resemblance of a city to a soul, is merely metaphor idealized, — metaphor raised to so high a degree that it no longer limits itself by normal conditions. In this dream-world the step from personifying an abstraction or a thing, whether present or absent, to addressing it, is very short; and so originates the idealized metaphor known as *Apostrophe:* "O Rome, my country!" or "Frailty, thy name is woman," or "Begin then, Sisters of the Sacred Well." And close akin to this trope is *Vision*, by which the distant, or the past or future, is regarded, and spoken of as present. "I see before me the Gladiator lie," says Byron; and the image is merely a simile idealized: "I hold in mind the image of the Gladiator as if I saw him."

> "They chant their artless notes in simple guise,
> They tune their hearts — "

writes Burns of the Cotter and his flock, as if the strains of their "Dundee" or "Plaintive Martyrs" or "Noble Elgin" were even now ringing in his ears. And when the future is represented as already accomplished practically the same trope recurs. The brothers in Keats's *Isabella* have not yet murdered their companion, but he is as good as murdered in their intention: —

> "So these two brothers with their *murdered* man
> Rode past fair Florence."

The rhetoricians call this device *Prolepsis*. It is nothing but a metaphor or simile in which time has been swallowed. Frequently, moreover, the idealized metaphor or simile is employed by some figure of rhetoric or of logical artifice, such as the hyperbole, — a statement intended to startle by its exaggerated form. For instance, in *Comus*, where the Spirit describing the song of the Sister says that he "took in strains that might create a soul under the ribs of death." Here the idealization is of physical and causal relations. But since hyperbole is essentially a logical artifice, not a poetic image or trope, it must be reserved for another paragraph. Of figures based upon unlikeness nothing special need be said. They are metaphors or similes negatively stated. The comparison, by emphasizing the difference between two objects in one respect, sometimes aims to suggest their resemblance in others.

Figures of Contiguity depend for their association in the mind, not upon a comparison of qualities, but upon neighborhood in material, time, or thought. When one memory-image is substituted for another because the two seem to have some connection in material or space, such as that of the material and the thing made out of it, the part and the whole, the whole and the part, the container and the thing contained, or *vice versa*, we have the trope called *Synecdoche*, a gathering of impressions under a common name; for instance, "the tinkling *brass*," "How beautiful are the *feet* of them that preach the gospel of peace," "*Jerusalem* sang for joy," "Costly thy habit as thy *purse* can buy." When, however, one memory-image is substituted for another, because of a relation in time or of juxtaposition in thought, we have *Metonymy* (or change of names). Of the former kind of metonymy an example would be "all autumn" for the fruits of that season. Of the latter kind there are various classes: The sign for the thing signified, as "the rod of empire" for imperial power, "gray hairs" for old age. Or the effect for the cause or *vice versa*, as "Danger will not wink on opportunity," since *winking* is both result and sign of growing sleepy; or "The bright *death*," for the cause of death — the sword. Or such substitutions as "the Spaniard" for Spain, and "France" for the King of France, which are not substitutions of part for whole or whole for part, but of representative for thing represented (*Antonomasia*), and specification for person specified. Another kind of metonymy is the application of the quality of one thing to another, by what is called poetic inversion, or transference of epithet, as when Goldsmith speaks of the "silent manliness of grief," or when Milton writes "the pensive secrecy of solitude," referring to the opportunity for thought which solitude affords.

Imagination and Fancy. — Before we pass to the less creative instruments of poetry, — logic and rhetoric, — it will be wise to consider

briefly the relation of Fancy to the image-making process that has just been described. Imagination modifies or shapes or creates appearances in such a way as to emphasize their real meaning; it confers upon the particular the universal character; by its touch ephemeral things are made enduring and the accidental becomes ideal. Fancy, on the other hand, plays with the likenesses or differences that are on the surface. It modifies or rearranges materials with a result which is slight, limited, evanescent. It talks of the ruby of the lip or the ivory of the brow, but there is no innate likeness between the objects compared. Fancy makes use of external facts for its similes and metaphors; imagination fires and sublimates the facts. Fancy makes use of casual outstanding properties of the objects that it brings into conjunction; imagination deals with properties that are inherent and eternal. Fancy is capricious, profuse, rapid, subtle, transitory; it pleases and amuses, whereas imagination enlightens, incites, and uplifts. Fancy, in fine, brings things together in correlation; it does not create; it embellishes, but it does not interpret. In general, it deals with the resemblances of forms, and appeals merely to the feelings to which form appeals. Imagination, on the other hand, treats of ideal values, penetrates the surface of things, appeals to the highest activity of the energy of the reader, sets him to creating for himself.

(2) **Figures of Logical Artifice.** — The poetic figures or tropes of which I have spoken depend upon a transfiguration of images associated by quality or connection. Poetic figures use words out of their literal meaning, but their purpose is affirmative: to present the objects of comparison in deeper and richer color. Two other classes of figures exist, however, which, though they sometimes adorn themselves with poetic images, do not depend upon the use of them; indeed, have nothing more in common with them than their ability to vivify, enforce, and adorn language. These are figures of logical artifice, and figures of rhetoric. The former are used in prose literature and in conversation as much as in poetry, — probably more. They are devices for leading the reader or hearer to a conclusion not always that which is apparently stated, nor indeed always that which is true. And still the reader or hearer is not deceived by the process, — and the speaker is satisfied if he has carried the audience to a halfway conclusion, or to a conviction exactly the reverse of that which *seemed* to be intended. These are therefore devices of reasoning or logic: not figures of serious logic, but more generally of logical fallacy, mock-logic or logical artifice. These figures are, first, *Hyperbole*. This exaggerates the emotion or sentiment of the speaker to a degree impossible or improbable to reconcile with fact: as when a mother says of a child who, on going to bed, unnecessarily repeats his adieux, "He

keeps up his 'Good-nights' until morning." Of course, the speaker does not intend to deceive, but merely to startle the hearer into an acceptance of something more than the plain statement of fact would carry, although less than the hyperbole literally conveys. Second, *Litotes* or *Innuendo*, which understates, or extenuates, the fact as much as hyperbole overstates: as when, of a jolly monk, Chaucer says, "He was not pale as a for-pyned goost." Third, *Irony*, which expresses the contrary of what is meant: as when we sneeringly refer to a bad speaker as an orator. Fourth, *Oxymoron*, where a coupling of words, apparently foolish because the words are contradictory, turns out on second thoughts to express a subtle distinction not conveyed by either word alone, — as when we say, "he is conspicuous by his absence," or "she was a glorious failure." Fifth, *Euphemism*, where we soften the disagreeable truth by pretending to regard it as good; when, for instance, we say of one who has died, "She is released."

Now it is an interesting fact not hitherto noticed, so far as I know, that most, if not all, of these figures depend for their characteristic, not upon the use of poetic images, but upon their appeal to the reasoning faculty of the hearer. The reader, by an instinctive logic, knows that the hyperbole does not reason fairly, but he knows also that the author credits him with too much common sense to be deceived. The reader is consequently flattered by the appeal to his intelligence, and the author gains his point, which was not to maintain all that the hyperbole affirmed, but to carry the reader *part way* toward the violent and impossible conclusion. In the lines

> "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No: this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
> Making the green one red,"

Macbeth argues from the fact that a certain amount of water used in washing a bloody hand will itself turn red to the conclusion that his hand would turn any amount of water, even the ocean itself, "one red." The reader, instinctively detecting the strained logic, accepts, however, the implication that the hand is steeped in blood beyond the common. So when the Spirit in *Comus* says of the Sister's song: —

> "I was all ear,
> And took in strains that might create a soul
> Under the ribs of death,"

the person addressed, though he may know nothing of logic, not even have heard of the fallacies of illicit process and undistributed middle, knows at once that to listen attentively is not to turn your whole body into an ear, that music, though it awakens or inspires the soul, does not

create it, and that a soul created could not be alive and dead at the same time. But he leaps to the implication intended by the hyperbole. Similarly, the innuendo insinuated by the statement that a monk is not pale as a forpined ghost depends for its success upon the probability that the reader will jocosely leap to the conclusion that the monk is the exact opposite, all that he was not said to be, a wine-bibber and purple-nosed. But both Chaucer and the reader are aware of many alternatives of complexion for jovial men, between the pallid and the purple. The irony of "Go, teach eternal wisdom how to rule" depends, likewise, upon a common understanding between speaker and hearer, by which the illogical exaggeration is accepted with a grain of salt, because at the same time recognized as a reduction to absurdity or impossibility. The oxymoron, such as Chaucer's

> "Smale fowles maken melodye
> That slepen al the night with *open eye*,"

depends upon a similar mock-logic; and the euphemism is but the converse of hyperbole, or if humorous, of the same sophistical kin as the litotes. None of these figures is essentially creative; but when wedded with poetic figures, metaphor, simile, synecdoche, metonymy, as in most of the examples given above, they enhance the emotional and imaginative effect, by their deviation from the processes of work-a-day reasoning.

(3) **Rhetorical Figures.** — Of rhetorical figures it is unnecessary to say more than that they, too, when used in poetry, attract not by their creative quality, for they have none. Some attract by the direct imitation of emotional outcry: as in the exclamation (or *ecphonesis*), the interrogation (or *erotesis*), the broken utterance (or *aposiopesis*). All three of these are employed in the exquisite

> "Had ye been there, — for what could that have done?"

of Milton's elegy. Others owe their charm and power to some artistic arrangement of sentence or paragraph as in the *iteration*

> "For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
> Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
> Who would not sing for Lycidas?"

Of *antithesis*, *balance*, *parallelism*, *climax*, and *anticlimax*, the same statement holds true. They are not figures of poetry, but of rhetorical arrangement.

Of course all these accentuations of the usual method of excited utterance, and these departures from the careless order of conversational speech, are common to the prose of practical literature. But the devices of the former or *emotional* kind appear frequently in poetry,

as if playing the part of waves on which the fleet of imagery — really poetic — may fare afloat. Devices of the latter or *ordering* kind serve as winds to marshal battle-ship and cockle-shell to the haven that is the heart.

7. THE RHYTHM OF VERSE: FOOT AND METRE

Verse depends upon the rhythm of sounds, their quality and pitch, and their harmony or consonance.

Rhythm in Verse. — The recurrence of identity at regular time or space intervals which pleases us when it characterizes thought and natural movements and forms, and which the musician, architect, painter, and sculptor aim to reproduce and emphasize in the materials of their various arts, the poet attempts to represent in the materials of language. He feels the rhythmic swing of thought or mood or action, and he translates this into language of a corresponding rhythmical beat. There is a rhythm of emotional diction in all speech; but since experience has taught men that certain rhythmical sequences are more suitable than others to the representation of particular moods, these sequences have been favored by the poets; have been, so to speak, singled out and conventionalized. They were undoubtedly suggested to our forefathers by the regular beat of the words which they chanted to the time of their choral dances. First originated the dance for some solemn or festival occasion of love or war, labor or religion, in which all marched together — one, two, three, four steps forward, and one, two, three, four, back. Soon accompanying emotional utterances were timed to the marching, such as *há-ah, há-ah, há-ah, há!* Then, in course of time, words were chanted in syllables alternately accented and unaccented according as the steps were heavy or light. When, later still, the chanted words came to be separated from the dance, there arose the independent song or story recited to a musical accompaniment. And, last of all, the verse divorced from music stood by itself. Now the difference between a verse-utterance of this kind and an utterance in prose, so far as the form is concerned, lies principally in the rhythm; that is to say, in the regularity with which the accented syllables recur. If we mark the accents of the sentence beginning "Now the difference," above, we have "Now the difference between a verse-utterance of this kind and an utterance in prose." It will be noticed that there is no uniform quality of movement up to, or down from, each accent; and no regular interval of time between the successive accents. But if we recast the sentence thus: —

"The difference between a line of poetry and prose," we note that the rhythm regularly ascends to the stress; and that the syllables capable of receiving accent have been ordered so that each is separated from the next by a light or unstressed syllable. From such a process of rhythmical arrangement as this there result first the *foot* and second the *metre*.

The Foot. — The foot in English poetry is the smallest possible independent combination of accented and unaccented syllables regularly recurring in a poem; and by its regular and continuous recurrence the foot determines the rhythm of the whole. The character of the rhythm depends, therefore, in English upon the composition of this unit, the foot. In Greek and Roman verse, on the other hand, the measurement was entirely by time, the accent was not regarded, and the unit was not the foot, as in English, but the short syllable (⏑), two of which were equal to a long (–). A foot of two longs (– –) was called a spondee; of a long and two shorts (– ⏑ ⏑) a dactyl; of two shorts and a long (⏑ ⏑ –) an anapæst; of a long and a short (– ⏑) a trochee; of a short and a long (⏑ –) an iambus; of two shorts (⏑ ⏑) a pyrrhic; of a long, two shorts, and a long (– ⏑ ⏑ –) a choriambus; of a short, long, short (⏑ – ⏑) an amphibrach; of a long and three shorts (– ⏑ ⏑ ⏑) a pæon. Feet of different lengths might, moreover, be arranged in a fixed order to make a verse. Thus: —

– – | – ⏑ ⏑ – | – ⏑ ⏑ | – ⏑ ⏑

"Maece | nas at-avis | edite re | gibus,"

where the first foot contains four units of time, the second six, the third six, and the fourth two. The prose accent is not observed at all, but the time-units must always follow the same order.

It must not be supposed that in English metres time plays no part whatever. Both accent and time enter into the composition of the English verse-unit, for the feet are always, in theory, at least, of the same length, and the accent of each foot preserves the same position in relation to the unaccented time-interval: that is to say, to the time occupied by the light syllables between the accents. The stress, as the verse-accent is called, may and sometimes does lengthen the pronunciation of the syllable upon which it falls. And since we measure our line of poetry, or verse, by the number of regularly recurring stresses, it is not strange that we ordinarily speak of the stressed syllables as long and of the others as short. But it must be remembered that the unaccented syllables in English are not equally short in conversational utterance, nor is each of them naturally one-half the length of a stressed syllable. We simply aim to write and read our verses in such a way as to keep the unaccented syllable or syllables within approximately the

same length of utterance, so that the stress may recur at regular intervals. In the line

"And the bay—was white | with si|lent light,"

'And' and 'the' are both short, but 'and' probably takes longer to say than 'the'. Both together, however, are supposed to occupy no more time than the single syllable 'was' in the next foot. So also 'was' and 'with' are read as equal in length with 'lent'; but there is no doubt that 'lent' is naturally longer than either of them. The character of the foot in English, then, depends more upon the regular position of the stress in relation to the interval of unstressed syllables than upon the equality of the short syllables one to another or their proportion to the stressed in length. There are usually not more than two unstressed syllables in a foot; but occasionally we find as many as three, for instance, in Kipling's *The Last Chantey*,

"Calling to the | angels and the | souls in their de|gree;"

and in *Fuzzy-Wuzzy*,

"He's an | india-rubber | idiot on a | spree,"

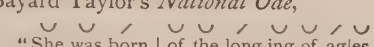
where the four-syllabled feet, accent and all, are approximately equal in length to the first, of two syllables and the last of one. There may even be four unstressed syllables. Still we may as well continue to use the names of classical 'quantity' feet for the simpler kinds of 'stress' foot. Those names, dactyl, etc., gained the right of way when our Elizabethan poets were trying to regulate English verse by Latin custom; and not even yet have any good substitutes, indicating the accentual principle, been coined. In symbolizing the rhythm we may, however, substitute the sign of a stress (∠) for the sign of a long syllable (_).

English Feet. — The commonest foot in English is the *iamb* (∪ ∠). For it the anapæst is sometimes substituted as in the following from *The Prisoner of Chillon*: —

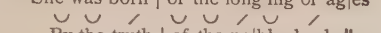
"There are sev|en pil|lars of Goth|ic mould."

Of all our rhythms the iambic appears to be the best adapted to serious, stately, continued narrative or dramatic or reflective verse. Note, for instance, the *Idylls of the King*, *Comus*, and *Il Penseroso*. It is the rhythm of our greatest poems. The *anapæst* (∠ ∪ ∪) (sister of the iamb, for the stress holds in both the same position in relation to the unstressed syllables of the foot) may be used by itself for both light and serious verse, but it is generally strengthened by the coöperation of the iamb. The ascending movement, at first rapid, then sustained, is singularly

suited to the expression of enthusiasm, exalted contemplation, successful effort, as in Bayard Taylor's *National Ode*,

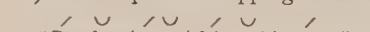


or in Browning's



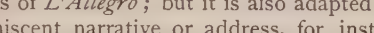
The *trochee* (/ ⏑) has a rapid and tripping effect as in

and in many lines of *L'Allegro;* but it is also adapted to thoughtful and somewhat reminiscent narrative or address, for instance, in Arnold's *Forsaken Merman*,



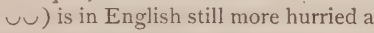
and in his *Rugby Chapel;* also in *Hiawatha.*

The *dactyl* (/ ⏑⏑) is in English still more hurried and bounding than its sister the trochee, with which it is often associated. It has a gracious swing, but even when well handled, as by Longfellow in the *Evangeline*,



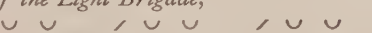
the protracted use of it is liable to be monotonous. Its most felicitous employment is in conjunction with the trochee, in the reflective or narrative lyric, as in *The Blue and the Gray*,

or *The Charge of the Light Brigade*,



Such are the feet principally found in English verse.

The *spondee* (/ /), two longs in Latin, would give us a line of successive stresses in English, and therefore cannot be consecutively employed. While we occasionally designate a word like *corn-crake* or *farewell* a spondee, or feet like "rocks, caves," spondaic, such feet in our verse of alternating stressed and unstressed syllables become trochaic or iambic. We may talk, however, of the spondaic effect of a verse that abounds in successive heavy and sonorous syllables. Note, for instance, Tennyson's line on the burial of the Great Duke. Scanned in the classical manner.



the movement is spondaic; but the rhythm by accent is trochaic.

The *pyrrhic* (⏑ ⏑) frequently occurs, so far as quantity is concerned, but we at once stress one of the syllables in imagination, or we pause to conform it to the rhythm, and so make trochee or iamb out of the foot. In the line

/ / / ⏑ ⏑ /
"The love | he bore | to learn|ing was | in fault,"

the natural pause before *was* gives that syllable a length that compensates for the lack of stress. A line of successive unstressed syllables would be as impossible as one of successive stresses.

The *amphibrach* (⏑ / ⏑) is said to occur in

⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ /⏑ ⏑ /⏑
"There came to | the beach a | poor exile | of Erin;"

but such a line is easily resolved into dactyls if we count the first syllable as extra by what is called anacrusis, and the last syllable as missing by what is called catalexis: —

⏑ / ⏑⏑ / ⏑⏑ /⏑⏑ /⏑
"There | came to the | beach a poor | exile of | Erin."

Or it may be read as anapæstic, "There came to the beach," etc., if we regard the first foot as iambic, and the last syllable as extra by what is called hypercatalexis.

As to the *pæon* (/ ⏑⏑⏑), it will be noticed that a secondary stress may sometimes fall upon the third syllable, making two trochees of the foot. In

/ ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑ ⏑ / ⏑ ⏑⏑ /
"Oh | Paddy dear and | did you hear the | news that's going | round,"

this secondary accent falls on 'dear,' 'hear,' 'go.' But there is more justification for recognizing this foot in English (as in Kipling's *The Last Chantey*, or *Fuzzy-Wuzzy*) than the spondee, pyrrhic, or amphibrach. Its opposite (⏑⏑⏑/) occurs also in English, and may be called the *anti-pæon*. It may sometimes be resolved into iambs.

Metre. — The foot is the unit of poetic rhythm in English. It is like a ripple on the current of a river. Metre, or measure, as the word signifies, marks off the current of rhythm into artificial divisions, each of which is a line or *verse*. Metre regulates the number of feet in verse; and with the end of one verse or "turn" the rhythm begins another. In progression from a verse of one foot or stress, to a verse of eight stresses, the measures are known as monometer, dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter, pentameter, hexameter, heptameter, octameter. These may be called one stress metre, two stress metre, etc., if the student prefer. For purposes of brevity trochaic monometer is frequently indicated by the letters *a x*; *a* standing for an accented syllable, *x* for an

unaccented. Similarly iambic monometer is indicated by $x\,a$; dactylic by $a\,x\,x$, anapæstic by $x\,x\,a$.

"With ravished ears" is *iambic dimeter* ($2\,x\,a$); "Rich the treasure" is *trochaic dimeter* ($2ax$); "Lift her up tenderly," *dactylic dimeter* ($2\,a\,x\,x$); "As I ride, as I ride," *anapæstic dimeter* ($2xxa$),—and so forth. It is surely not necessary to give examples of all varieties. *Iambic trimeters* open the stanzas of *Rabbi ben Ezra*, "Grow old, along with me." An example of *trochaic trimeter* would be "Where the apple reddens"; of *trochaic tetrameter*, "Bacchus' blessings are a treasure" (this will be recognized as the metre of *Hiawatha*); of *iambic tetrameter*, "At last divine Cecilia came"; of *dactylic tetrameter*, "Just for a handful of silver he left us" (the last foot trochaic); of *anapæstic tetrameter*, "I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he" (the first foot iambic).

Frequently metres of the same rhythm but of different length are combined. as, for instance, in the well-known *Common Metre* (C. M.) of the hymnals, which is the old ballad measure found in *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Otterbourne*, etc.,—iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter alternating: $4\,x\,a$, $3\,x\,a$, $4\,x\,a$, $3\,x\,a$. Most of Scott's metrical romances are written in combinations of iambic tetrameters and trimeters; so also, of the poems included in this volume, are *Horatius* and *The Ancient Mariner*.

The *pentameter* is best known in its iambic rhythm. When rhymed in couplets it is the *Heroic Verse* of many seventeenth and eighteenth century epics and dramas; and that is the metre of *The Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* and the *Rape of the Lock*. When unrhymed this pentameter is *Blank Verse*, as in Shakespeare's plays, *Paradise Lost*, *Comus*, and Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*:—

"So all day long the noise of battle rolled
Among the mountains by the winter sea."

Of blank verse we shall presently have more to say. It is the standard English metre for themes of gravity and magnitude.

Other five-stress, or pentameter lines, trochaic, dactylic, or anapæstic, are occasionally used. The first is monotonous,—unless varied by the insertion of a dactyl in the second foot and an occasional spondee in the first. Then it attains somewhat of the piquancy of the Latin *hendeca-*

syllabic (or Phalæcian) verse written by Catullus and Martial. The hendecasyllabic has never flourished in England, for

" Hard, hard, | hard it is, | only | not to | tumble,
So fan|tastical | is the | dainty | metre " —

as Tennyson says in an attempt to reproduce it. The dactylic pentameter is also rare. The anapæstic, however, has been used with splendidly musical effect by Browning, as in *Saul*,

" A Face like my face that receives thee ; a Man like to me,"

and by Tennyson in *Maud*.

Of the six-stress line, the more important varieties are the iambic, called ordinarily the *senarius* or Alexandrine, — and the dactylic, which has appropriated the name *hexameter*. The senarius was largely used in early modern English, especially by the dramatists, as, for instance, by Nicholas Udall in what is regarded as our first regular comedy, *Roister Doister*. His senarii run thus : —

" Truepennie get thee in, thou shalt among them knowe."

But the *senarius* was at that time often combined with the older seven-stress iambic, or *septenarius*, that had been common in Middle English poetry. This conjunction of senarii and septenarii was called Poulter's measure, from its irregularity of count (like the thirteen to a baker's or poulterer's dozen). The following from the Moral Play of *Wyt and Science* is an example : —

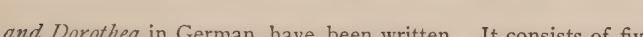
" Oh, help me now, poor witch, in this most heavy plight,
And furnish me yet once again with Tediousness to fight."

The six-stress iambic is better known, nowadays, by its name *Alexandrine ;* and it has most commonly found favor as the concluding line of the Spenserian stanza — (see below the selection from *The Faerie Queen*) — where it lends an air of sonority and finality to the eight preceding five-stress verses.

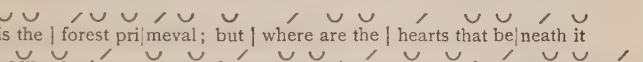
The *anapæstic hexameter* has not been extensively used in English. One of the best examples is the verse of Browning's *Abt Vogler*, where the anapæst and iamb are interchangeably employed, and with an effect, now melodious, now reverberant.

To the *dactylic hexameter* special notice must be given, for in it some remarkable poems, such as Longfellow's *Evangeline*, Clough's *Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*, Kingsley's *Andromeda* in English, and Goethe's *Her-*

mann and Dorothea in German, have been written. It consists of five dactyls and a trochee ; but for any one of the first four dactyls a spondee or trochee may be substituted : —



For two reasons, among many, the modern hexameter cannot be expected to reproduce the music of the Latin from which it is adapted: first, because Latin verse is quantitative, and, consequently, capable of stately and subtle variation of movement, of acceleration and delay beyond the capability of accentual verse ; and second, because the English hexameter is, and must remain, somewhat monotonously dactylic, if its pulse, or rhythmic beat, is to be readily caught by the reader. Such lines as


" This is the | forest pri|meval ; but | where are the | hearts that be|neath it
Leaped like the | roe, when he | hears in the | woodland the | voice of the | hunts-
man ? "

could hardly be pronounced other than metrically, but that is because the regular beat of the dactyl is maintained. Such regularity, however, becomes tedious in a very short time. The first four feet of Vergil's hexameter, on the other hand, may be either dactyls or spondees ; the fifth, which is by rule a dactyl, may for rare and specific reasons be a spondee ; and the sixth is either spondee or trochee. This capability of variation gives the line a marvellous elasticity. Take, for instance, the verse

the heavy effect of the opening spondees is not impossible to reproduce in our accentual English verse ; but since our language is full of monosyllables and iambic beats, it is hard to introduce spondaic cadences with such natural stress that the reader must pronounce the line with rhythmical accuracy. And unless the line of poetry is so written that the reader cannot but feel its metre, that line is not verse. Longfellow tries to introduce spondees into the hexameter, but they generally turn out trochees, and fail of the ponderosity desired. Frequently his dactyls are also forced. In such feet as " woodland the," " meanwhile the," the length of the second syllable cannot help spoiling the dactylic accent of the first. And such feet are common in *Evangeline*. Clough trying sometimes, and sometimes not, to observe the Latin rules of position (by which a vowel is lengthened when followed by two consonants), introduces spondees, but with no success other than to drive to distraction those who are ignorant of Latin prosody, and some who are not.

Let the uninitiated try his hand at the following from *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich*: —

"Flower, fruit, farm-store, but sounds and sights of the country,"

or,

"Half-awake servant-maids unfastening drowsy shutters,"

or,

"Hampered as they haste, those running, these others maidenly tripping."

It must, however, be acknowledged that Clough himself, Kingsley in his *Andromeda*, Robinson Ellis in his translations from the Latin, and some others, have occasionally achieved success in the attempt to unite the leading features of the Latin time-element with those of English accent. The reader, curious in such matters, if he happen to possess a copy of *The Classic Myths in English Literature*, will find there a translation of the *Peleus and Thetis* of Catullus, in which the attempt is made to reproduce in accentual verse, not the Latin feet so much as the pauses or cæsural rhythms of the original. These are called equivalent hexameters.

Closely allied with the Latin hexameter is the *Elegiac Verse* used by Ovid. It consists of hexameters alternating with dactylic pentameters. The latter have the effect of a hexameter that has lost the last half of its third foot, and of its sixth; for a pentameter is composed of two parts, each of which contains two dactyls and a half (a long syllable). Spondees may take the place of the dactyls in the first half, but not in the second. Though the metre has flexibility, it has not been much attempted in English. Tennyson has tried it in the poem called *Elegiacs*: —

"Creeping through | blossomy | rushes and | bowers of | rose-blooming | bushes,
Down by the | poplar | tall | rivulets | babble and | fall."

Better elegiacs than Tennyson's have been produced by William Watson in his *Hymn to the Sea*; and a most melodious modification of the metre is afforded by Swinburne's *Hesperia*.

How Metres are varied. — It has already been intimated that although poetic form depends upon the regular recurrence of feet and of verses, the effect of such regularity would be wearisome if strictly maintained. The aim of artistic technique is not to reproduce the unyielding sameness of natural law alone, but also to display the manifold details and differences of garb through which Nature may reveal herself, by emphasizing the variety of her manifestations to certify their common spirit and significance. So poetic form depends for its artistic effect upon what appear to be variations from the rule as well as upon conformity. The more important departures from the normal or typical

metre may be observed in the treatment of the pause, the movement, the metrical accent, and the syllable count.

Variety of Pause. — Pauses are of three kinds: metrical, elocutionary, and phrasal. The *metrical* compensates for a beat generally light which has been omitted for the purpose of breaking the monotony, or heightening the variety of the metrical structure, as when Sir Bedivere says, in the *Passing of Arthur*,

"O me, | my king, | let pass | whatev|er will |
∨ Elves, | and the harm|less gla|mour of | the field,"

where the light beat omitted before 'Elves' is compensated for partly by the metrical pause (∧) before the word, partly by the extra light syllable in the second foot. (The division of the stress, indicated by the grave accent over 'mour' and 'of,' will be considered later.) A similar metrical pause is common in lines of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*: for instance,

"And oft as if her head she bowed,
∨ Stoop|ing through | a flee|cy cloud,"

where the omission gives the line a trochaic effect. Since such omission rarely occurs, however, without also emphasizing the syllable before or after, this kind of pause is closely allied to the next, the *elocutionary*. This pause is common in everyday conversation, and is a momentary silence more expressive perhaps than speech. It is sometimes marked by the dropping of a syllable or even foot; and, as will presently appear, it occurs largely in dramatic blank verse. The *phrasal* pause marks the logical divisions of the sentence or paragraph. It is a breathing-place in the expression of the thought, and is frequently called rhythmical pause, section pause, break, or cæsura. It is not marked by a missing syllable.

The elocutionary and phrasal pauses exist in all prose diction, and are therefore most frequently to be found in those kinds of poetry which represent the sequences of everyday speech; narrative, drama, and reflective monologue. They occur, therefore, with great frequency in that species of English metre furthest removed from the regular rhythms of song and music, but best adapted to the expression of progressive thought, — I mean *blank verse*.

The Elocutionary Pause in Blank Verse. — The charm of blank verse resides largely in its ability to reconcile in a symphonious movement the conflicting claims of the stereotyped metre (so homely with its five iambic feet that one would expect it to be repetitious and

tedious) and of the fitful but steadily progressive cadence of everyday speech. Upon the cadence of prose diction — broad of sweep and free from restrictions of stress and quantity, — the iambic convention is imposed; not, however, as a die pressed upon molten gold, but rather as a vestment of Coan simplicity thrown about an Aphrodite, — heightening the natural grace that it but half conceals. Because of this ability to blend convention and caprice, blank verse is well adapted to the metrical needs of long poems — such as the plays of Shakespeare and other dramatists, the *Idylls of the King*, *Comus*, and *Paradise Lost*. Dramatic blank verse especially indulges in the elocutionary pause; and where the pause occurs, a syllable or even two may be omitted, as, for instance, *before* an important affirmation, the name of one addressed in exclamation, an inquiry, an imperative request, a command, as,

"Come, Sus|sex, ∧ | let's in; | we shall | have more."

where even a missing stressed syllable is compensated for by the pause that precedes a command. The pause may occur *at* the transition from one form of utterance to another, where a word is suppressed because it goes without saying, or where a burst of laughter intervenes or a sigh or a gulp of rage, as when the emperor, in Greene's *Friar Bacon*, outraged by the fare set before him, cries: —

"And give | us cates | ∨∧fit | for coun|try swains;"

or, as in Marlowe's *Faustus*, to indicate the silence of embarrassment: —

"∨∧Par|don me sweet, | ∨∧I | forgot | myself."

Here the pause after 'sweet' is elocutionary; that before 'Pardon,' metrical. Still a third kind of elocutionary pause is used to indicate the silence *after* an outcry. I do not mean to say that these devices obtain only in dramatic and narrative verse. We find them also in lyrical, as, for instance, in Tennyson's

"∧ Break, ∧ break, ∧ break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea,"

where their force is easy to determine. A knowledge of their quality in utterance is indispensable in the reading of poetry, especially of blank verse. It is by virtue of such knowledge that our best poets introduce what seem to be irregularities of foot or accent, or substitutions of what seem to be an alien rhythm, trochaic, dactylic, or amphi-

brachic, as the case may be, — the despair of ignorant readers and pedantic critics, but the delight of Parnassus.

The Metrical Pause in Blank Verse. — In narrative verse, such as that of *Paradise Lost* or the *Idylls of the King*, the pause may perhaps more frequently be regarded as existing, not to indicate a gap through which — as in the elocutionary — action or thought has escaped, but to compensate for a missing light beat, purely metrical, as in the line,

"⏑ By | the wa|ters of life | where'er | they sat."

This opens with a pause for the light beat, and the single-syllabled foot is further compensated for by the presence of an extra light syllable in the third foot. Such compensation is acceptable to the ear; for iamb and anapæst are of the same quality, the rhythm of each being of the kind that ascends toward the stress. Many authorities would, I know, introduce the line with two trochees, thus: —

"By the | waters | of life | where'er | they sat."

But I do not think that the metrical ear tolerates the yoking of rhythms diametrically opposed in nature. That would be rag-time. The charm of these openings, sometimes called trochaic or inverted, proceeds rather from the illusion of a changed rhythm than from the actual substitution of the descending trochee for the ascending iamb. A metrical (or sometimes elocutionary) pause is substituted for the first light beat; but the ascending rhythm of the line is reasserted by a succeeding anapæst. In *Comus*, the eighth line,

"Strive to keep up a frail and feverish being,"

may be scanned with an opening trochee, but it seems more congenial to both rhythm and speech that a pause making for emphasis should precede "strive," thus: —

"⏑ Strive | to keep up | etc."

The Phrasal or Cæsural Pause. — In all poetry, as in prose, it is natural for the reader to pause within the sentence at the close of each section of thought. In the lyric, in which the measures are generally of forms shorter than pentameter, the pause frequently coincides with the end of the verse. But in blank verse and the unrhymed hexameter the thought-movement swings along from line to line, and the pause falls, as a rule, not at the end of a verse, but somewhere within it.

In Hexameter. — The grace of Latin hexameter depends largely upon a skilful variation of this phrasal or cæsural pause; and a few words

of exposition may, therefore, be acceptable. Any break caused by the ending of a word within the foot was a *cæsura;* but the *cæsural pause* indicated a rest in the sense as well. If the cæsural pause fell within the second foot it was called trihemimeral, and was frequently followed by a pause in the fourth foot as well, called hephthemimeral, thus (the pause indicated by a dotted line): —

— ∪ ∪ — ∪ ∪ — — — — — ∪ ∪ — —

"Inde to|ro ⋮ pater | Æne|as ⋮ sic | orsus ab | alto."

But its favorite position was penthemimeral, that is, in the third foot, either after the long syllable or *arsis*, when it was called masculine, or in the *thesis* (that is to say, between the two short syllables of the dactyl), when it was known as feminine. Similar rules obtain in English dactylic hexameter. The first line of *Evangeline* has a feminine cæsura after 'primeval,' a pause in the third foot, penthemimeral. The second line has two cæsural pauses, both masculine, one in the second and one in the fourth foot: —

/ / / / / /

"Bearded with | moss ⋮ and in | garments | green, ⋮ indis|tinct in the | twilight."

The third line has a masculine cæsura in the third foot. These phrasal pauses, falling not at the end but in the middle of metrical feet, serve to vary what might otherwise lapse into singsong.

In Blank Verse. — So also in blank verse, and in the best heroic pentameter. The opening lines of *Comus* show an interweaving of two distinct rhythms, that of the iambic metre, which is supposed to be regularly divided, and that of the phrase, running over from one line to the next, and taking breath at the sense-pause, as it would in the larger movement of prose: —

"Before | the star|ry thresh | old ⋮ of | Jove's court
My man|sion is | ⋮ where those | immor|tal shapes
Of bright | aër|ial spir|its | ⋮ live | inspher'd
In re|gions mild | ⋮ of calm | and se|rene air."

It will be noticed that the phrasal or cæsural pause does not necessarily fall in the middle of a foot, as in Latin hexameter, but it is well that it should occasionally fall there, and it is essential that it should subtly vary its position. In English iambic pentameter the cæsura is masculine if it fall after an accented syllable; feminine if after an unaccented syllable. Of the latter there are two kinds, epic and lyric. The *epic cæsura* falls after the first syllable of a substituted anapæst. As in the *Passing of Arthur*, line 104,

/ / / ∪ ∪ / /

"Look in upon the bat|tle ⋮ and in | the mist."

The *lyric cæsura* occurs just before the stressed syllable of a substituted anapæst,

" Martial Planta|genet, ⁝ Hen|ry's high-minded son,"

or of an iamb,

" And secret pas|sions ⁝ la|bour'd in her breast."

Variety of Movement. — I said above that the metrical beat was always supposed to be maintained. That it is not slavishly respected will further appear when we consider the possible variations in stress and in the numbering of syllables within the line. Here suffice it to say that the requirements of metre and of phrase, while they combine to produce the progression of verse, cannot exist side by side without continual compromise. They combine by a process of mutual surrender. The reader knows that the foot scheme demands recognition of its fixed beat: in reading the poem, however, he follows, also, the larger grouping of the phrase, balancing, as it were, the claims of foot with those of sense. To blend the metrical or foot movement with that of phrase or thought, he suspends the former at times, imagining it but not enforcing it, then restores it to its function. Just as if one should for good reason raise the flood-gates of a mill-dam: the stream sweeps down its natural channel, till the gates are again dropped into place. But there is also interwoven with the metrical and phrasal groupings — to produce the complex movement of verse — an elocutionary word-group which must not be overlooked. Of the last there may be two or three units in a single line, separated by pauses of utterance sometimes almost imperceptible. If we indicate the foot-divisions by vertical lines, the phrasal by vertical dots as before, and the elocutionary (such as the sensitive reader would instinctively observe for purposes of emphasis and modulation) by a line drawn underneath (by an arrow, when continued to the next verse), the three groupings or movements may be presented to the eye as follows: —

" Thus Sa|tan ⁝ talk|ing to | his near|est mate | ,
With head | uplift | above | the wave | , ⁝ and eyes |
That spark|ling blazed | , ⁝ his oth|er parts | besides
Prone | on the flood | , ⁝ extend|ed long | and large,
Lay float|ing ma|ny a rood | ⁝ ; in bulk | as huge |
As whom | the fa|bles name | of mon|strous size | ,
Tita|nian ⁝ or | Earth-born | that warred | on Jove | . . ."

Now, the underscored units are what might be called the feet of the natural or prose utterance: multiform in accent and quantity. In the first line the *prose feet* run ∪ / ∪ | / ∪ | ∪∪ / ∪ | / , but the stresses

of these four units, different as they seem from any regular verse-rhythm, coincide with four of the iambic stresses of the prescribed metre. Thus, while the four elocutionary, or prose, feet, *Thus Sátan, tálking, to his néarest, máte*, suggest an independent tune or cadence, they conform (like an alto to a soprano in music) to all but one of the stresses of the primary cadence of the iambic pentameter. And, in fact, the remaining iambic stress is rather suspended (in imagination) over the whole of the short-syllabled foot 'ing to,' than forced by the reader upon the light syllable 'to' where it metrically belongs. It may be said, indeed, that that stress is actually postponed, and added to the next foot. That he can vary these elocutionary units or prose feet endlessly for vocal effect without obliterating the accentual uniformity of the iambic metre by the side of which they pace; still more that he can muster the regular iambic and the irregular prose foot into the larger phalanx of the logical or phrasal movement, is one of the especial merits of the "mighty mouthed inventor of harmonies," the author of *Paradise Lost*.

Enjambement. — To the heroic couplet, as well as to blank verse, the overflow of thought from one line to the next appears to be essential. The rhymes alone are like a pair of cymbals: when they have clashed everything seems to have been said. But Chaucer displayed considerable skill in running the phrase from one line and even couplet to the next. Witness, for instance, the enjambement, as this device is called, of the first fifty lines of the *Prologue*. The dovetailing of verses is not overdone: the cæsural or phrasal pauses are so variously shifted, and the occasional compensatory, or metrical, pauses so cunningly inserted, that the correspondence of rhymes, when it occurs, produces the effect rather of bridle-bells jingling in a whistling wind than of the aforesaid cymbals. From that day till that of Marlowe, and then again of Waller (about the middle of the seventeenth century), heroic couplets moved more or less in a strait-jacket, the spirit never exceeding the couplet, sometimes not even the line itself. After Waller, — Dryden and Pope restored the end-stopped line and couplet, making of it a highly polished vehicle of wit, or weapon of satire, but altogether too well regulated for the employ of unsophisticated poetry. The *Rape of the Lock*, the *Dunciad*, and *Absalom and Achitophel* carry the couplet to its climax of artificial excellence. In Keats and other poets of the nineteenth century the phrasal movement again resumes an unimpeded progress.

Variety of Stress. — While each of the words used in prose has its fixed logical accent, that which enables it to impress its meaning upon the hearer, not every word retains its prose accent in poetry. Some-

times the stress which falls upon a word in verse is determined by metrical reasons, sometimes by rhetorical or syntactical. The metrical stress frequently falls, or appears to fall, upon syllables lacking accent, as for instance upon such words as 'and,' 'of,' 'the,' in insignificant positions.

"Of man's first disobedience and the fruit"

appears to require a stress upon 'and.' So also this line from the *Passing of Arthur*,

"Shield-breakings, *and* the clash of brands, the crash" —

and it is possible that the reader should lay the stress there for his mind's ear. But as a rule the necessity of stressing such a word in utterance may be obviated by observing a metrical or an elocutionary pause before it. The first line of *Paradise Lost* must be scanned as it should be read,

"Of man's | first | disobe|dience | and the fruit,"

the elocutionary pause before 'first' being compensated for by the additional emphasis laid upon that word, and by the succeeding anapæst. The pause at the lacuna, after 'disobedience,' is compensated for by the two-syllabled unaccented portion of the succeeding anapæst. Similarly, the line from Tennyson demands an elocutionary pause after 'breakings,' as if a long syllable were missing; the following 'and' is then gathered up into the succeeding anapæst, "Shield-break ings, | and the clash."

As I have said before, the attempt to avoid stressing an unaccented syllable accounts largely for the scansion of certain blank verses with a trochaic opening, or with a trochee after the cæsural pause. But it is not necessary in such a line as this from the *Passing of Arthur*,

"Shocks, | and the splin|tering spear, | the hard | mail hewn,"

either to lay the accent on 'and,' or to make a trochee of 'shocks and.' Tennyson intended the reader to make an elocutionary pause after 'shocks' and then to hurry on to the 'splintering.' So also Shakespeare means us to emphasize 'books' in the following line, by pausing before it: —

"Tongues | in the trees | : books | in the run|ning brooks."

Jacques would not have dreamed of accenting the first 'in' or of reading 'books in' a trochee. I suppose that sometimes, however, it is more reasonable that a pyrrhic (⏑⏑) should receive half a stress on each

of its syllables or a full stress on the second than that the line should be read with a rhetorical pause. Such may be the case in

"The best | (and of | the prin|ces some | were such)."

This is especially true when the syllable to be stressed has a secondary accent of its own, as in

"To fur|ther this | Achit|ophel | unites."

Accents, Hovering and Wrenched. — The metrical stress is frequently divided equally between the two syllables of a foot. In the first line of *Lycidas*,

"Yet once | more, O | ye Lau|rels, and | once more,"

a heavy stress hovers over both syllables of the second foot, and of the fifth; the unaccented syllables of the fourth are pronounced slowly, as if they divided with difficulty the little stress that they can win from the 'and.' This is the *hovering* accent. When it stresses alike two heavy syllables, like 'more O,' it may be called spondaic; when it hangs as if holding its breath over two light syllables, like 'rels and,' it may be called deferred. And the reader will find that the foot with a deferred stress is usually followed by a foot of heavy syllables, spondaic, like the final 'once more,' upon which that lighter stress seems to fall, as if atoning for its reluctance. When the stress is metrically thrown on the wrong syllable of a word, as in 'my ain countrée,' the accent is said to be *wrenched*. Milton seems to use the wrenched accent with some frequency, *e.g.*, in *Comus*, 'without,' 'serene,' 'supreme,' 'extreme,' 'complete.' But since he often indulged in lines in which a pyrrhic foot was compensated for by a succeeding spondee, such a line as

"She | that hath that | is clad | in com|plete steel"

may be read with a suspended or deferred stress over 'in com.' Both syllables of the succeeding foot are heavily accented.

Variation in Number of Syllables. — That a variety is sometimes introduced into blank verse by the substitution of trisyllabic feet for dissyllabic has been already remarked. It is, however, but rarely that we find in a line of blank verse more than three anapæsts in the place of iambs; indeed, few lines which indulge in the license admit as many as

two. Anapæstic substitutions abound in Shakespeare, but Milton subjects them to careful rules; so also Wordsworth and Tennyson. As to other kinds of verse, it would be useless to attempt any rule other than that feet to be interchangeable must be of the same kind of rhythm, trochee, dactyl, and anti-pæon, descending; iamb, anapæst, and pæon, ascending.

Extra Syllables. — In a line of descending rhythm an extra syllable frequently occurs at the beginning. This is called *anacrusis*. It will be noticed that such a syllable is unstressed and that it may generally be joined to the stressed syllable at the end of the line preceding, so as to complete with it a trochee or, if there be two of these extra syllables, a dactyl. For instance, in *The Last Chantey*, where the metre is of trochees, dactyls, and pæons: —

"Thus said the | Lord in the | vault above the | cherubim,
Calling to the | angels and the | souls in their de|gree:
'*Lo!* | earth has | passed a|*way*
On the | smoke of | Judgment | *Day*.
That our | word may be es tablished shall we | gather up the | sea?'"

where the extra light syllables at the beginning of the fourth and fifth lines are examples of anacrusis, but the anacrusis in each case completes the foot begun at the end of the line preceding: as 'gree Lo,' 'way on the,' 'Day that our.' Of the missing syllable at the end of the fifth line something will be said later.

In a line of ascending rhythm, especially of blank verse, an extra syllable is sometimes adroitly inserted before the cæsural pause, as in "To Canterbury : with full devout corage," or in "Master Burden : when shall we see you at Henley?" In the latter line the extra syllable would appear to compensate for that which is lacking before the stress-syllable opening. The cæsura in each case is of the kind already described as epic. At the end of an iambic line, as in the line last quoted, an extra syllable will also frequently be found. This, called the *feminine ending*, lends elasticity to the verse; and it is interesting to note that the earlier masters of blank verse — Marlowe, Greene, Shakespeare, and their contemporaries — used it with increasing frequency as they gained mastery of technique. As an example of this *hypercatalectic*, or *feminine, ending*, may be cited a line from *Comus*: —

"Be it not done in pride or in presump|tion."

Extra syllables are sometimes reduced to the measure of the line by *elision*, as

"Th(e) estaat, th(e) array, the nombr(e) and eek the cause," —

and so frequently in Chaucer; or by *apocope*, as when a syllable is dropped within a word, for instance, 'fi'ry,' 'fri'r,' 'pow'r'; or by *synalœpha*, if the vowel at the end of a word is not elided, but pronounced *with* the vowel at the beginning of the next, as in 'to avoid' (twavoid). *Slurring*, indeed, of which all these are species, obtains commonly in verse as in conversation.

Lacking Syllables. — The opposite of slurring or synæresis, is *diæresis*. By means of this a line which appears to lack a syllable is sometimes expanded to its proper measure; a syllable like *your*, for instance, may be broken into two, *you-r̈*; or a long vowel, like the first of *A-men*, be prolonged so as to take the place of two syllables.

A lacking syllable may also be compensated for, as we have already seen, by a metrical or elocutionary pause in almost any foot of a blank verse. Much more frequently, of course, in case of a light syllable than of a stressed. The practice obtains in all kinds of verse. A line like

"Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,"

which lacks a syllable at the beginning, is said to be *truncated*. It is sometimes also called *acephalous*, that is, without a head. A line which lacks a syllable, or syllables, at the end (and such is often found in verse of descending rhythm) is *catalectic*. In Arnold's *Rugby Chapel*

"Coldly, sadly descends
The | autumn-evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts"

is trochaic trimeter catalectic, with dactylic substitutions. The catalexis of the first line is compensated for by the anacrusis at the beginning of the next, 'scends the.' Not so, however, with the catalexis of the second line, 'field.' Of this nature is the omission of a syllable at the end of the fifth line of the stanza from Kipling's *The Last Chantey* quoted a few paragraphs above.

8. TONALITY IN VERSE: MELODY

We have so far been considering verse as characterized by its movement. Hence the preceding discussion of rhythm, and of metre, which is the measure of rhythm in verse. But verse, like all other arts, de-

pends upon the material in which it works as well as upon the manner or rhythmic order of the working. The manner, or proportion of architecture, is itself conformable to the conditions of the stone in which it works; so also of sculpture. The æsthetic manner of painting depends in part upon the quality of the surface to be painted and of the pigments that are used. The rhythm of choristic dancing and of dramatic acting, or of oratorical delivery, is determined, or at any rate modified, by the possibilities of the human figure. The rhythm of music shares, as well as shapes, the properties of pure sound; and of verse, the properties of sound symbolizing thought, that is to say, of word-sounds. The quality of word-sounds, their tone-color, as the Germans, from the analogy of painting, have called it, or their *tonality*, as we may name it, is therefore of vital significance. From it, as controlled by rhythm, proceed those sequences which figure as the *melody* of verse, and those correspondences or rhymes which figure as its *harmony*.

Melody. — We shall consider first the properties of word-sounds as they strike the ear singly, and then as they combine in sequences and contribute to the melody of speech. After that, we shall pass to the consideration of the larger correspondences of verses, — rhymes, stanzas, and structural forms — which constitute the harmony of poetic technique. It is an essential of poetry that it should, by its sound, so far as possible, echo or suggest the sense of the thought underlying. Sometimes the verse should glide from the lips of the reader; sometimes it should leap; sometimes the vocables should be liquid, sometimes slow or difficult of articulation; sometimes explosive. Some consonants are smoother or more resonant than others, some have an affiliation for others, combine readily with them; and *vice versa*. The poet has, or should have, a sensitive ear. He has learned, usually by experience, the value of the consonants in themselves and in sequence; the qualities of vowels, also, — which are longest, fullest, richest in tone, which are short and obscure, which high-pitched or low, — and by what devices various effects may be produced, pleasing, diversified, tedious, or disagreeable to the ear. A verse may have rhythm, such as

"Mírab Hickgas zígzagged tównward,"

and still lack grace. That the student should appreciate the reasons for the fluidity or reluctance of verse is much more important than we ordinarily imagine. The attempt to imitate natural sounds by using words such as 'buzz,' 'boom,' 'crackle,' which appear to recall them, is specifically known as *onomatopœia*. But *onomatopœia* applies in a broader and more artistic manner to the suggestion of things perceived by any sense, and of mood and movement as well.

Consonants, Hard and Soft. — The consonants fall into two classes, according as they are produced with or without any resonance of the voice. If we try to produce or prolong the consonant *z*, a buzzing sound made by the voice is distinctly heard. It is a *voiced consonant*. *S*, on the other hand, is a hissing, formed by the breath alone as it passes between the point of the tongue and the upper gums. It is a *breath* consonant, and yields a sharper and harder sound than *z*. Similarly *p*, *t*, *k*, will be found to be *breath* consonants; they are pronounced without any resonance of the voice, and are thin and hard; while *b*, *d*, and *g* (as in *get*), which correspond with them respectively, are capable of resonant prolongation, that is to say, are *voiced* and, in comparison with them, full and soft.

There are ten hard or breath consonant sounds in English, *p*, *t*, *k*, *wh*, *f*, *th*, *s*, *sh*, *ch*, and *h*. With the first nine correspond respectively the soft or voiced consonant sounds *b*, *d*, *g*, *w*, *v*, *dh*, *z*, *zh*, and *j*. (*S* and *f* must be reckoned as *z* and *v* when so pronounced.) There are, in addition, six other soft consonants, *m*, *n*, *l*, *r*, *y*, and *ng*. In the lines,

> "Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
> Beloved from pole to pole!
> To Mary Queen the praise be given!
> She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
> That slid into my Soul" —

the thought is of comfort, and this Coleridge aims to express by sounds of soothing effect. It will not at all surprise the reader if he examines the consonants of this passage, to find that only sixteen are hard; and that of the remaining forty-nine ten are transitional from hard to soft, like *sl* in '*sl*eep,' or from soft to hard, like *nt* in 'se*nt*,' while thirty-nine are altogether resonant and soft.

Now, since not only our poetry, but our language, aims in general at ease of utterance, we shall have to turn to verses that are deliberately not expressive of the smooth and soothing, if we would find a superabundance of hard consonants. Like a wild-cat mad with wounds, Horatius

> "Sprang right at Astur's face;
> Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
> So fierce a thrust he sped,
> The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
> Behind the Tuscan's head."

In the first, second, and third lines, those descriptive of the action, Macaulay has used twenty-four hard or breath consonants to only sixteen of the soft, — a proportion of three to two. This excess of hard consonants for a purpose is all the more convincing when we reflect

that of the twenty-five possible consonant sounds in English, fifteen, that is to say, three-fifths, are voiced and soft in character.

Consonants, Explosive and Prolonged. — Still another distinction between consonant and consonant is of importance as affecting the grace or fluidity of a line of verse. Such letters as *p*, *b*, *t*, *d*, *k*, *g*, are made by closing the mouth passage and then exploding it with the breath. These are called *stopped* (or *explosive*) *consonants*. The sound ceases with the explosion; and the effect is sudden and incisive. But the liquids, *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, *ng*, and all the other consonants, *f*, *v*, *w*, *s*, *z*, *h*, and certain combinations, such as *sh*, *th*, *wh*, *ch*, *j*, are formed by allowing the breath to escape gradually through a passage of the mouth or nose: they may be indefinitely prolonged, and they produce a lingering impression upon the ear. In the mellifluous stanza quoted above from the *Ancient Mariner*, there are forty-seven *prolonged* (or *continuant*) consonants and only eighteen explosives.

It is not at all surprising that a verse which aims to express the gradual, gracious, and gentle, should employ more continuant consonants than explosives. It would indeed require an effort for the verse *not* to do so, for there are three times as many consonants of the *continuant kind* as of the other; but that an explosive thought will, so far as the language permits, avail itself of words of an explosive sound appears beyond doubt when we examine verses expressive of haste, contempt, or anger. In those three lines, recounting the fierce thrust of Horatius, the explosive consonants rise so far above their ordinary proportion that there is almost one for every two of the more tranquil kind. So, also, when Milton, excoriating lean and flashy songs, says that they

> "Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw,"

the verse becomes more than half explosive in sound alone; and that in spite of the fact that the alphabet affords only one explosive to three continuants. The words are difficult of utterance. The prominence of the gutturals in '*g*rate' and '*sc*rannel,' the collocation (awkward to articulate) of hard and soft consonants, as in '*their scr*annel,' '*wretched str*aw,' the presence of a hiss in four out of the five feet, the nasal quality of the pivotal sound *an* — all these factors contribute to the unpleasant effect: to say nothing of the monotone of vowels in the first half of the line, and the quality of the only sound that is both long and open, *aw* — saved to mark the contemptuous utterance with which the line concludes. Difficulties of utterance, similarly subtle, purposely beset the opening of *Lycidas*: —

> "I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
> And with forced fingers rude
> Shatter your leaves."

The lines teem with harsh and explosive consonants, so ordered as to make the passage from one to the other laborious.

The gentle utterance which may be obtained from liquids, alone or in combination with other consonants, hardly needs exemplification. 'Me, Goddess, bring'—prays Milton's Man of Thought,

> "'To archèd walks of twilight groves,
> And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
> Of pine or monumental oak.'"

Almost every other syllable is a liquid note. The more pleasing of these effects are produced when the liquids *l* and *r* combine with the lip consonants *p*, *b*, *m*, *wh*, *w*, and to some extent *f* and *v*; or more generally when any of the liquids (*l*, *m*, *n*, *r*, *ng*) combine with the voiced consonants (such as *b*, *d*, *g*, *v*, *z*) rather than the breathed (such as *p*, *t*, *k*, *f*, *s*). Note, for instance, the often quoted

> "Murmur of innumerable bees;"

or the lines in the *Passing of Arthur*,

> "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
> And the wild water lapping on the crag;"

or that stanza of Dryden's *Song for St. Cecilia's Day*, where

> "The soft complaining flute
> In dying notes discovers
> The woes of hopeless lovers
> Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute;"

or the fifth stanza of *Alexander's Feast*. We must, however, guard against the assumption that particular consonants produce always the same sensation, smooth or harsh. The hissing effect of "scrannel pipes of wretched straw" was, for instance, noticed above, but the hard or breathed *s*, when cunningly associated with pleasing vowel sounds, may also delight the ear. It is used with an effect decidedly sensuous in *St. Agnes' Eve*,

> "Jellies soother than the creamy curd,
> And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon,
> Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
> From Fez, and spicèd dainties, every one,
> From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon;"

and with musical effect in *Lycidas*, when

> "Entertain him all the saints above
> In solemn troops and sweet societies,
> That sing, and singing in their glory move,
> And wipe the tears forever from his eyes."

Still it must be granted that the English language suffers in musical quality because of the necessary recurrence of the sibilant in verb and noun inflections. Poets use it when they can't help it, or when it subserves a purpose. But they generally avoid using it at the end of one word and the beginning of the next. 'Jellies soother' is redeemed only by a pause between the sibilants.

Vowels. — The vowel sounds may be classified according to the relative time of enunciation, as long (the sounds italicized in f*a*ther, f*a*te, f*ee*t, p*o*le, p*oo*l, b*u*rn, and the diphthongs in P*au*l, t*i*me, h*ou*se, t*u*ne, c*oi*n), or short (the sounds italicized in slugg*a*rd, p*a*t, p*e*t, f*i*t, p*o*t, p*u*ll, b*u*n); or they may be distinguished according to the quality of the sound, as open (*e.g.*, f*a*ther, P*au*l, p*o*t, m*a*n), middle (*e.g.*, p*o*le, b*u*rn, f*a*te, g*e*t), and closed (*e.g.*, p*oo*l, p*u*t, f*ee*t, f*i*t). The diphthongs slide in sound from open to closed.

Kinds of Vowel Sequence. — A succession of vowels of one kind, long or short, or open or closed, is tiresome. Verse, therefore, eschews such sequences save when a monotone, or some such effect, is desired: it, on the other hand, like all art, delights in deploying the variety of its elements, emphasizing the manifold nature of its parts, — while subordinating them to the effect of the whole, coördinating the units in a unity higher still. It would be futile to enunciate any exclusive principle in accordance with which poets produce their diverse effects of vowel sound; suffice it to say that from the fifty or more vowel sounds recorded by writers on English phonetics, a marvellous variety of combinations may be produced even by one who knows nothing of the classifications into long, short; open, middle, and closed. Though the principles of vowel sequence in verse may be hard to determine, some of the kinds may readily be described. Four of these I have noticed as used with significant effect.

The first depends upon *repetition* of sounds of like quality. An effect of grandeur is produced by the recurrence of long or open vowels, as in the apostrophe in *Childe Harold*, beginning

> "O Rome! my country, city of the Soul!
> The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
> Lone mother of dead empires! and control"—

and just the opposite effect results from the predominance of short, or of closed, vowels as in the line that follows the preceding,

> "*I*n their sh*u*t br*ea*sts their p*e*tty m*i*sery."

In the kingly description in *Tintern Abbey* of the Presence,

> "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,"

the open sounds increase in frequency and dominance as the thought gathers force. This may be called the *crescendo*. The repetition of closed vowels and shorter sounds increasing in frequency produces of course a *crescendo* of the converse kind. As when the poet speaks of

> "The burthen of the mystery
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world
> Is lightened."

I know no example of the monotone more expressive of the weary round than the lines in Tennyson's *Lotos Eaters*,

> "Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
> Weary the wandering fields of barren foam," etc.

where even the rhymes, instead of interweaving sounds of appropriate dissimilarity, fall into assonance.

The second kind of vowel sequence depends upon *alternation*, as in

> "While the still morn went out with sandals gray,"

where the regular variation of short, or of closed, syllables (like 'still') with long, and open (like 'morn'), conveys an effect of self-restrained but sweeping and graceful motion.

The third, depending upon a *pivotal vowel*, is much affected by Milton. Sometimes for five or ten lines together the ascent to, and descent from, a central vowel sound, seems to be the guiding principle of quality or tone. In the following from *Il Penseroso* such a vowel obtains about the middle of each verse; it stands forth unique in sound and importance: —

> "And let some strange mysterious dream,
> Wave at his wings in airy stream
> Of lively portraiture displayed."

I should call this the *jewelled* line. The note struck by the central vowel is not repeated on either side. The next line of this passage, however, reverts to the sequence of alternation: one sequence overdone would lose its savor.

In the fourth of these vowel systems, one sound-series is *balanced* or echoed by another, like in quality, but opposed in sense and separated in position, as in Byron's description of the Dying Gladiator,

> "his manly brow
> Consents to death, but conquers agony."

"*Agony*" recalls the sound of "*manly* brow," but yields an opposite sense; just as "*con*quers" repeats in sound and parries in meaning the force of "*con*sents."

From what has been said it will, I think, be evident that poets avoid the repetition of the same vowel tone in successive syllables unless the repetition has some end to subserve, — because an ordered variety of component sounds enriches the music of verse. Allowing for a somewhat wider latitude, the principle holds true also of consonants. The assonance of the *i* sounds, and the alliteration of the *l*'s in

"Softly on my *eyeli*ds *l*aid,"

are not agreeable because the component parts in each case are almost one in position as well as in sound.

Pitch. — The dependence of poetic effect upon the proper sequence of vowel sounds is to some extent accounted for by the fact that vowels differ in *pitch* as well as in length and quality. That 'feet' takes longer to say than 'fit,' is evident, and that 'man' is broader and richer in tone than 'men'; but we do not often stop to think that each vowel sound is more easily and naturally uttered upon a certain appropriate musical note than upon any other note higher or lower; that, in other words, the widening or contraction of the cords of the throat to produce a vowel sound will, if the sound is prolonged, determine the note on which that vowel can most readily be sung. So that the notes appropriate to the whole series of vowels would form a gamut. Every arrangement of vowels, then, produces a sequence of impressions upon the ear corresponding in a faint degree to that of melody in music. Science has not yet conclusively registered the subtle melody of vowel sounds; but that distinctive properties of pitch exist for the several vowels is a fact, and upon it depends, in part, what we call the modulation of speech. Close *i* as in 'fit' is said, for instance, to have the highest pitch and clearest sound; *a*, as in 'father,' to be most readily uttered halfway down the gamut, and *u*, as in 'full,' to be the lowest of the vowel sounds. The sensitive ear cannot but note the modulation produced by the ups and downs of the voice when such lines as

"To walk the studious cloisters pale
And love the high embowèd roof"

are read with respect for the natural pitch of the vowels. Such modulation, or inflection, is of course instinctive. To the subtle and delicate sequence of pitch by vowel sounds there is also added in the reading of verse the elocutionary element of intonation. That also is, or should be, instinctive. The rising tone with which we conclude an interrogation or a warning, the depression of the voice at the end of an answer, and the combination of rise and fall in exclamations of surprise or contempt, are, of course, natural auxiliaries to the sense; but they and

numerous others of their kind when introduced into verse demand continuous variation of pitch, and so contribute to the melody of the poem.

9. TONALITY IN VERSE: HARMONY; RHYME

Harmony. — As melody in verse depends upon the *sequence* of vowel and consonant sounds, their quality or tone, their musical pitch, and the modulations of the voice that naturally distinguish impressive and emotive utterance, so harmony in verse is produced by the *correspondence* of sounds; that is to say, by *rhyme*. As harmony in music results from coördinating melodies, or subordinating two or more — alto, tenor, and bass — to a dominant air, so in verse it results from coördinating or subordinating, in two or more verses, the sounds occurring at certain regular intervals.

Rhyme. — This correspondence is rhyme; and in English it is of three principal kinds: end-rhyme, or rhyme properly so-called, alliteration or initial rhyme, and assonance or middle-rhyme. In end-rhyme the sound of two or more words is the same in the last accented vowel and all that follows. The consonant sound preceding the last accented vowel must not be the same in the words concerned. The 'ess' in 'possess' and 'confess' constitutes the rhyme. The initial *s* and *f* avert the monotony of *identical syllables*. 'Possess' and 'recess' would not be allowed as rhyme in English, because the last syllables are identical, though it would be in French. But combinations of consonants with *r*, or *l*, *s*, or *h*, producing distinct consonant sounds, afford sufficient variety. '*Cr*y' and '*tr*y,' '*sl*ow' and '*bl*ow,' '*st*ale' and '*t*ale,' '*sh*are' and '*th*eir,' '*wh*ere' and '*h*are,' are good rhymes. It is not sufficient that the spelling of the rhymed portions be the same; the *sounds* after the initial consonant must be identical. 'Scorn' is not a correct rhyme for 'torn,' but 'morn' is. The spelling (which in our modern English by no means indicates the sound) has, indeed, nothing to do with the rhyme. 'Buy' rhymes with 'nigh,' and 'Cholmondeley' with 'comely.' English phoneticians like Mr. Sweet would, I suppose, justify the rhyming of 'morn' with 'dawn,' because in England the *r* before a consonant or a pause is dropped. Such, however, is a Cockney rhyme. It is not accepted by English metrists; and in Scotland, Ireland, and most parts of America it would not be tolerated. Rhyme, I repeat, requires identity of the sounds concerned; similarity is not sufficient: 'mind' does not rhyme with 'time,' 'lover' with 'move her,' 'son' with 'throne.' We find, to be sure, even the best of poets occasionally defiant or dormitant; but it is wise for the beginner to live within the letter of the law. Sometimes, but rarely, the rhyme depends upon an unaccented syllable, or the secondary accented syllable of a three-

syllabled word. Milton rhymes 'liberty' with 'thee,' and 'revelry' with 'pageantry.'

Rhymes of one syllable, as 'fair' and 'square,' 'for*bear*' and 'com*pare*,' are called masculine; those of more syllables than one, such as 'merry,' 'very,' 'merrily' and 'verily,' 'saturated,' 'maturated,' whether double, triple, or quadruple, are called feminine. The quadruple is rarely used save for humorous effect. The triple lends itself sometimes to light composition as in Butler's *Hudibras;* sometimes to the pathetic as in Hood's *Bridge of Sighs.*

End-rhyme may, of course, fall at the end of a cadence *within* the verse, as in

"The splendor *falls* on castle *walls*,"

or

"At *Florès* in the *Azorès*, Sir Richard Grenville lay."

This internal, or involved, rhyme is, however, pleasant only when the rhymes recur at proper rhythmic intervals.

Since the harmony of a stanza depends not only upon the perfection of its rhymes, but also upon the variety of rhymes combining to make, as it were, a musical chord, it is essential that where different rhyme-units alternate, or come in juxtaposition, they should not depend upon the same or similar vowel sounds. A slight examination will show what variety there is in the succession of rhyme-sounds in any good stanza. Take the second of Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality*, 'goes,' 'rose,' 'light,' 'bare,' 'night,' 'fair,' 'birth,' 'go,' 'earth.' A stanza of which the rhymes ran 'goes,' 'rose,' 'mole,' 'soul,' 'boat,' 'rote,' would be tedious. One in which the final sounds were but slightly different would also fail to satisfy the ear; as, for instance, "stream," "him," "dream," "brim."

Alliteration. — In initial rhyme, or alliteration, the opening of the corresponding syllables is the same, as in "winter," "wasted." In an Anglo-Saxon verse, consisting, as it did, of two sections (or half-lines), this rhyme served to unite the halves in the rhythmical unit of the verse. The alliteration marked one or both of the two stressed syllables of the first half-verse, and always the first stressed syllable (or rhyme-giver) of the second half — as, for instance,

"*f*ysan to *f*ore : him waes *F*rean engla."

Our Anglo-Saxon forefathers alliterated not only consonants, but also initial vowels in these stressed syllables. While, however, they insisted that the consonant sounds of an alliteration should be the same, they permitted any opening vowel to alliterate with any other. End-rhymes did not obtain. But from the tenth century on, the rules of initial rhyme were somewhat relaxed, and end-rhyme began to appear by its

side. And yet, as late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we find poems like the *Piers Plowman*, —

> "I was *w*eary, for*w*andered: and *w*ent me to restë
> Under a *b*road *b*ank: *b*y a *b*urnës sidë
> And as I *l*ay and *l*eanëd: and *l*ookëd in the waters
> I *sl*umbered in a *sl*eeping: it *s*weyvëd[1] so merry, —"

persisting in the ancient sinewy fashion, and even in the sixteenth century verse in the alliterative rhyme of the Anglo-Saxons still occasionally appears.

Our modern poets make less obvious, and more cunning use, of alliteration than did their ancestors. They do not require its presence, nor do they restrict it to certain positions in the line. When marking accented syllables modern alliteration emphasizes them rather to the obscuration of the unaccented, and so preserves the rhythmic leap or swing of its predecessor. The frequent and emphatic initial rhyme of

> "I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance
> Among my skimming swallows,"

is calculated by Tennyson to the peculiar effect desired, — not to any artificial rule. So also that of Shelley's *Cloud*, —

> "I sift the snow on the mountains below
> And the great pines groan aghast."

More subtle, because less frequent, is the music of the King's complaint in the *Passing of Arthur*, —

> "I found Him in the shining of the stars,
> I marked Him in the flowering of the fields,
> But in His ways with men I find him not."

Still more artistic is the alliteration that pervades but is not obvious, falling often in the middle of a word, and sometimes on unaccented syllables. In the poem just cited, when Sir Bedivere replies to the King: —

> "let pass whatever will,
> Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field,
> But in their stead thy name and glory cling
> To all high places like a golden cloud,"

his words are liquid with hidden *l*'s, and in a less degree with *m*'s and *n*'s.

Assonance. — A third kind of rhyme, though it is not in English regarded as a satisfactory substitute for end-rhyme, has yet uses somewhat similar to those of alliteration. This is *assonance* or middle-rhyme. It is commonly employed in Spanish poetry, and consists of

[1] sounded.

the identity of accented vowel-sounds: (as in '*air*,' d*ay*; r*oa*reth, f*oa*meth). The identity of the succeeding consonants, which would make end-rhyme, is not involved. George Eliot makes conscious use of assonant rhyme in the *Spanish Gypsy*. And in such lines as

> "O strong soul, by what shore
> Tarriest thou now? For that force
> Surely has not been left vain!
> Somewhere, surely, afar
> In the sounding labour-house vast
> Of being is practised that strength,"

in Matthew Arnold's *Rugby Chapel*, it is introduced with somewhat the effect of end-rhyme.

But ordinarily assonance is used, not as a substitute for the harmony of verse-endings, but as an auxiliary to the melody of vowel-sequence. Tennyson employs it *within* the verses of the *Passing of Arthur* as an echo of physical and spiritual monotony, and with rare effect: —

> "Dry clashed his harness in the icy caves
> And barren chasms, and all to left and right
> The bare black cliff clanged round him, as he based
> His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang."

Three insistent vowel-sounds dominate the passage.

The Refrain. — The effect of rhyme is also produced by the device called refrain: the repetition at intervals of certain words or of a line or two. In a less artistic form, that of chorus, it has been employed in song from early times to afford the sympathetic crowd an opportunity of venting its emotions. The chorus recurs at regular intervals, and may easily become tedious. The less regular repetition of certain verses in the older, and many of the later, ballads, is, therefore, more acceptable. For numerous examples, see *The Poetry of the People*. But the refrain is at its best when it combines the charms of recurrence and caprice in some artfully artless structure, such as the rondeau, triolet, villanelle, or other French form of verse at present practised with no little success in English poetry.

10. THE LARGER UNITS OF VERSE: STANZAIC AND STRUCTURAL FORMS

The various elements of verse hitherto discussed: rhythm and metre, melody and harmony, combine in the production of stanzas, and the higher structural forms of verse.

The Stanza. — As the verse consists of units which are feet, so the stanza is made of units which are verses. The stanza is a definite subdivision of a poem: it is frequently, indeed, a little poem in itself. It is built up of verses which consistently follow the scheme of rhythm, metre, and rhyme determined as suitable to the emotional thought to be expressed by the poem as a whole. Though stanzas sometimes overflow, one into the other, each should yield its definite impression. Couplets or pairs of rhyming verses, arranged in stanzaic form, as in *Barbara Frietchie*, are not ordinarily regarded as stanzas because they are frequently not complete and self-explanatory. In heroic verse, such as that of the *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales* or the *Rape of the Lock*, not the couplet but the rhythmical sentence is the structural unit of the poem. In blank verse there is likewise no stanza; the progressive components are sentence, paragraph, and canto or book.

To the qualities of the individual line of verse, namely, metre and melody, the stanza adds harmony. By linking verse to verse in a system of rhymes it produces the effect of a musical chord. The successive stanzas, though each should be emotionally and imaginatively distinct, are similarly interdependent within the poem; each contributes to the meaning and beauty of the rest, and all to the harmony of the whole.

Three-line Stanzas. — Of the three-line stanza there are two principal forms. One is the triplet, where all the verses (that is, lines) rhyme to the same sound, *aaa*, *bbb*, *ccc*, etc., as in Edmund Gosse's *Lying in the Grass*: —

> "I do not hunger for a well-stored mind,
> I only wish to live my life and find
> My heart in unison with all mankind.
>
> "My life is like the single dewy star
> That trembles on the horizon's primrose-bar —
> A microcosm where all things living are;"

or Tennyson's *Eagle* and *The Two Voices*, or Crashaw's *Wishes for the Supposed Mistress*. The other form is *terza rima*, used with astonishing diversity of effect by Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, but not much availed of in English. The first and third lines of *terza rima* rhyme; and the second gives the rhyme to the first and third of the next stanza, thus: *aba*, *bcb*, *cdc*, etc. One of the few English poets to employ this stanzaic structure with consistency and success is Augusta Webster, to whose poems, *Too Faithful* and *If*, the reader may be able to refer. In this volume an example will be found in Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*.

Four-line Stanzas. — Of the stanza of four verses, called ordinarily the quatrain, the following are the better known varieties (all iambic): *aabb*, as in the Doxology opening, "Praise God from whom

all blessings flow"; *abab*, as in Gray's *Elegy* (frequently one rhyme masculine, the other feminine, as in *Barbara Allen* or Tennyson's *The Brook*); *abcb*, as in *Sir Patrick Spens*, *Chevy Chase*, and the opening of *The Ancient Mariner*; *abba*, as in *In Memoriam*; *aaba*, as in Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám*; and *aaab*, as in Burns's *Bannockburn*, where the stanzas run *aaab*, *cccb*, *dddb*, the last verse of each stanza taking the *b*-rhyme. Of these quatrains, the most popular are the second and third. The third, *abcb*, and sometimes the second, *abab*, — when they are disposed in lines of four iambic and three iambic feet as above alternating (4 *xa*, 3 *xa*), constitute the Common Measure of our old ballads. The first two lines when run together,

"The king sat in Dunfermline town | drinking his bluid-red wine,"

are indeed nothing other than the old-fashioned septenary: considered by some to be the natural epic verse of England, and used with distinction by Chapman in his translation of Homer's *Iliad*: —

"Achilles' baneful wrath resound, | O Goddess that imposed
Infinite sorrows on the Greeks, | and many brave souls loosed."

Speaking of Common Measure (the C.M. of our hymn-books as well as ballads) we are naturally reminded of its sister quatrains, the Long and Short Measures (L.M. and S.M. respectively). Of the Long Measure four-stress iambic, an example rhyming *aabb*, is the Doxology above referred to, — of the Short, rhyming *abab*, the following Doxology (3 *xa*, except the third line, which is 4 *xa*): —

"To God, the Father, Son,
And Spirit ever blest,
The One in Three and Three in One
Be endless praise addressed."

When these stanzas are doubled they are indicated as L.M.D., etc.

Of the four-line stanzas, the finest results have been achieved by the fourth kind mentioned above, the quatrain of *In Memoriam* (4 *xa*): —

"I held it truth, with him who sings
To one clear harp in divers tones,
That men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things,"

and by the fifth, — that of the Rubaiyat (5 *xa*): —

"Yet, ah, that Spring should vanish with the Rose!
That Youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close!
The Nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah whence, and whither flown again, who knows?"

These two forms are signally adapted to the expression of reflective, didactic, or elegiac moods. A modification of the latter, which may

now be called the Fitzgerald quatrain, is used by Tennyson in *The Daisy*: —

"O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom, the glory,
A mount of marble, a hundred spires!" —

in which tetrameters the trochaic ending of the third line and the acceleration of the fourth produce an effect akin to that of the Horatian Alcaic described below under imitations of classical metres.

Stanzas of Five, Six, and Seven Lines. — Five-line stanzas, such as Shakespeare's *Who is Sylvia?*, Shelley's *Skylark*, and portions of *The Ancient Mariner*, are obtained by adding a rhyme in *a* or *b*, or by rearranging with a rhyme in *c*, as in the *abccb* of *The Ancient Mariner*, ll. 137–161.

Of six-line stanzas, the more common are *abcbdb* (*Hunting of the Cheviot*, ll. 1–6; *Ancient Mariner*, ll. 257–262), or *ababcc* (*Rule Britannia*), or *aaabab* (Burns's *Mountain Daisy*), and those which combine two divisions of three lines each, as *aabccb* ("Blow, blow, thou winter wind"), and *aabaab* (Rhyme of Sir Thopas). Among the best-known of the seven-line stanzas are the *aabcccb* of *God save the King*, and the *ababbcc* of the rhyme-royal which Chaucer, in *Troilus* and other poems, uses with harmonious result.

"In May that moder is of monthës gladë
That freshe flourës, blewe, and whyte, and redë,
Ben quike agayn, that winter dedë madë,
And full of bawme is fletinge every medë;
Whan Phebus doth his brightë bemës spredë
Right in the whytë Bole, it so betiddë
As I shall singe, on Mayës day the thirdde."

The metre is iambic pentameter hypercatalectic ($5 \times a +$).

Stanzas of Eight Lines and More. — The eight-line stanza is frequently obtained by doubling the system of a quatrain, as in Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes" (*abcbabcb*), or by adding one quatrain to another, as in *Horatius* (*abcbdefe*), or by linking together two quatrains in the common rhyme of the fourth and eighth lines, as in Drayton's *Agincourt* (*aaabcccb*). Of the numerous eight-line varieties the most famous, however, are the *ottava rima*, followed by Byron in Don Juan (*abababcc*: $5 \times a$): —

"Most epic poems plunge *in medias res*
(Horace makes this the heroic turn-pike road),
And then your hero tells, whene'er you please,
What went before — by way of episode,

While seated after dinner at his ease,
Beside his mistress in some soft abode,
Palace or garden, paradise or cavern
Which serves the happy couple for a tavern,"

and, second, the stanza of the French *ballade*, of which an example will be given under the fixed verse-forms that use a refrain. Its rhymes run *ababbcbc*, as in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale*. If we add to the iambic pentameters of this scheme an Alexandrine (6 *a x*), rhyming in *c*, we produce the famous Spenserian stanza (*ababbcbcc*), as in the selection in the text from the *Faerie Queene*, in the *Eve of St. Agnes*, and in *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. Some stanzas of a greater number of lines than those described above we shall consider later under structural forms of verse.

Imitations of Classical Stanzas. — It will be appropriate in passing to say a word concerning English experiments with classical stanzas. Of these, the more frequently attempted have been Sapphics, Alcaics, and Choriambics. But none of them has really found a lodgment in our literature. The Sapphics and Adonics of the famous

⏑ – – – ⏑⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑
Inte|ger vi|tae scele|risque | purus

were seriously copied by the Elizabethans, in the Latin quantitative manner; but the following stanza from Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*, though it does not pretend to regard the ancient quantities, comes nearer to combining quantity with accent than any of the older attempts.

"Saw the white implacable Aphrodite,
Saw the hair unbound and the feet unsandalled
Shine as fire of sunset on western waters;
Saw the reluctant —"

A more popular but utterly unclassical method of reading the Latin verse given above is by accent —

Integer vitae scelerisque purus;

and this accentual scheme, because it appeals more readily to the English ear, has frequently been adapted in verse: for instance, in a paraphrase of Horace, *Odes*, I, 30,

"Venus, thou queen of Cnidos and of Paphos,
Leave them behind, thy chosen hills of Cyprus, —
Come where the shrine of Glycera invokes thee, —
Smoking with incense:

"Come with the winsome Lad of Love a-glowing;
Come with the nymphs and Graces loosely girdled;
Come with Juventas, gentle at thy bidding,
And with swift Hermes."

The music of the Alcaic stanza is more complicated but proportionally capable of richer effects. Probably the best example in English is to be found in Tennyson's lines to Milton, opening: —

"O might|y-mouth'd in|ventor of | harmonies,
O skilled | to sing of | time or e|ternity,
God-gift|ed organ|-voice of | England,
Milton, a | name to re|sound for | ages."

The quantities here follow almost exactly the Latin rule, and the words admit, at the same time, of an accentual reading which is rhythmical. The accentual scheme without reference to Latin quantities is followed in an address entitled, *To Q. H. F.* (*Atlantic Monthly*, August, 1886). It begins thus: —

"O farm|er-poet, | Bard of Ve|nusia,
O court|ier-poet, | Pride of the | Palatine,
O old|-world lover, | laughing | lyrist,
Singer of | Chloe, Leu|conoë, Lyde, —"

The system, though capable of varied melody, is probably too complex to win popularity with English readers. Metres depending on the choriambic foot, _ ∪ ∪ _, by accent and quantity have been attempted by Swinburne, Robinson Ellis, and others. Perhaps the simplest stanzaic form of choriambics is that known as the third Asclepiad. It is used by Horace in the graceful *Vitas Hinnuleo*: —

"Like some | tremulous fawn | Chloe you flee | from me."

The stanzaic form, as a whole, seems to be adapted to English accentual uses; as in the following lines descriptive of *Pandora*: —

"She was | perilous fair|, charming incon|sequent —
April | clothed in a dream|; each of the god|desses
Lent one | ling'ring, super|nal,
Inmost | touch to her wit|chery."

But the choriambs naturally resolve themselves, with the assistance of pauses and pyrrhics, into dactyls.

Structural Forms. 1. The Ode. — The most imposing of larger verse-forms of fixed structure is the regular ode. This consists, in imitation of the famous odes of Pindar, of strophe, antistrophe, and epode; the first and second corresponding in stanzaic composition; the last differing, but complementary, in form. The strophe or 'turn' and the antistrophe or 'counter-turn' were chanted by the Greek chorus of singers as they moved up one side of the orchestra and came down the other; the epode was chanted after they had come to a stand. The most successful writers in English of the regular ode are Collins and Gray; indeed, the *Progress of Poesy* by the latter is regarded as the best of the species in our language. In it the rhyme-scheme of strophe and antistrophe is *abbaccddeeff*, of the epode *aabbaccdedefgfghh*; these compose a movement, and there are three movements of the kind. The strophes and antistrophes are iambic, the epodes trochaic. The lines vary in number of feet, but strophes and antistrophes observe one metrical scheme, epodes another. In poetic forms of this description the arrangement of the 'turns,' 'counter turns,' etc., is left to the constructive taste of the writer, but once determined it must be maintained. Where liberty is so great and rules are self-imposed the noblest results may be expected. And they have been achieved not only by Gray and Collins, but by Jonson and Congreve. The ode lends itself to the expression of enthusiasm, of passion under control, of elevated, highly imaginative reflection, of panegyric and elegy. The elaborate complexity of its Pindaric original presents, however, to the uninitiated, the appearance of irregularity. Hence the application of the name "Pindaric" by Cowley, about the middle of the seventeenth century, to poetic outbursts of his own which disregarded both the fundamental divisions of the ode, and its minor restrictions of order and uniformity.

The Irregular Ode. — The so-called "Pindaric" ode of Cowley secured many admirers; and it has been customary since his time to call every impassioned strain of unsystematic rhyme, rhythm, and metre, an ode. In the hands of the tyro this unchartered liberty of construction is perilous, but under the critical control of genius it has resulted in some of the finest poems in the language; Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* and *St. Cecilia's Day*, Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality*, Tennyson's on the *Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and Lowell's for the *Harvard Commemoration*. Still another kind of irregular ode has been written by Milton, Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, etc., in distant imitation of the choruses of Greek tragedy. But of choral odes, graceful and harmonious as many are, we have not space here to give an account.

2. Forms more rigidly fixed. The Sonnet. — Passing to

structural forms regulated by a limit of lines, or by a fixed scheme of rhyme or refrain, we notice first the sonnet. This was introduced from Italy by Wyatt, and was employed by Surrey, Sidney, Spenser, Shakespeare and many other sixteenth-century poets. It fell into disuse after the death of Milton, but was revived toward the end of the eighteenth century, and has had wide and deserved vogue from that time on. The legitimate or Italian form consists of two parts — an octave, rhyming *abbaabba*, and a sestet, rhyming preferably *cdecde*, or *cdcdcd*. Examples of the fourteen lines thus properly arranged are Milton's *On his Blindness* and Keats's on the *Grasshopper and the Cricket*, in both of which the sestet consists of two tercets running *cde, cde;* also Wordsworth's "The World is too much with us" and Keats's *On Chapman's Homer*, in which the second of the sestets mentioned above is used. For all of these see the selections in the body of this volume.

It will be noticed that some sonnets of the legitimate form arrange the sestet *cdedce, cdeced, cdedec*, or *cdeedc;* and that others, while preserving the Italian octave, allow the sestet to close with a couplet. Wordsworth goes so far, indeed, in his "Scorn not the Sonnet," as to vary the octave as well, the scheme for the whole running *abbaacca, cdcdee*. But the legitimate sonnet does not readily tolerate such liberties. Like a cameo it is small of compass, rich in material, delicate and conventional of detail. The thought or mood must be significant and lucid, a poetical unit, single in its emotional and imaginative effect. The octave bears the burden; a doubt, a problem, a reflection, a query, an historical statement, a cry of indignation or desire, a vision of the ideal. The sestet eases the load, resolves the problem or the doubt, answers the query, solaces the yearning, realizes the vision. It gilds thought with the tracery of instance, crowns it with the sufficient and inevitable actuality that lies within the wisdom of art. Hence the larger movement of the octave; but also for simplicity and unity of effect the limitation to two rhymes, for force the repetition of the inner couplets, and for suspense the reluctant sweep, in the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines, of the outer harmony. Hence, too, the briefer but more varied sound-scheme of the sestet; for the skilful and rapid interweaving of rhymes counterbalances the previous hesitancy, enriches the music, and enhances the climactic effect. To write the octave *abbaacca*, or *abbacddc*, is to disintegrate the cumulative sequence of rhyme; to admit into the sestet a couplet, is to barter for a jingle what might have been a symphony. From what has been said it will, of course, appear that while the thought of the sonnet is progressive, it takes breath, as it were, between the octave and the sestet. But this pause need not be a period, nor need it occur only at the end of the eighth line. More artistic in my opinion is the practice of those who suffer the octave to

push one or two waves over the edge of the sestet. Such encroachment, or, to change the figure, *enjambement*, occurs in nearly all of Milton's sonnets, and in those of Wordsworth mentioned above.

The "Fourteener." — The term, sonnet, has been long ago applied to another form of fourteen lines, written by Shakespeare and others, which, though it has merit, pays no attention to the principles that characterize the Italian norm. The Shakespearian sonnet consists of twelve lines (three quatrains, each of distinct and alternating rhymes) and a concluding couplet. It was devised by the Earl of Surrey as a variation upon Wyatt's Italian or regular pattern, and adopted by many Elizabethans. The sonnets of Shakespeare included in this volume will illustrate the difference between this quatorzain, or "fourteener," as Charles Lamb called it, and the genuine form. Its merits are those of its distinctive structure. The concluding, often epigrammatic, couplet, which would not be tolerated in the regular sonnet, is here a fitting climax to the three four-line stanzas of alternating rhymes that have preceded. Of the Spenserian sonnet — another, but more artistic, variety of the "fourteener" — the student will find some account under Spenser in the Progress of Poetry and in the Notes at the end of this volume.

3. Fixed Forms with Refrain. — Other forms of verse having a fixed rhyme-structure are the rondeau, rondel, triolet, and villanelle, each of which has two rhymes, and the ballade, chant-royal, and pantoum which have more. They are all borrowed from French models, and are characterized in common by the presence of a refrain. Chaucer and some of his contemporaries tried a species of ballade, and Wyatt wrote rondeaus; but it was not until recently, and under the leadership of poets still living, such as Austin Dobson, Andrew Lang, and Edmund Gosse, that the refrain-structure obtained popularity in England. Its varieties may not possess the dignity and inevitableness of the sonnet, but they have lightness, harmony, lucidity, and grace. A show of unadorned and spontaneous neatness distinguishes them; but they are actually the product of art carefully concealed. The refrains recurring at intervals with a familiar note, but a significance ever shifting with the shifting construction, add a pleasurable anticipation and surprise to the circlet of sound. They are stones of the same water, but varying facet, set in one smooth gold ring. Some of the French forms have taken root, and the species therefore calls for a brief mention here.

Rondeau, Rondel, Triolet, and Villanelle. — An example of the *rondeau*, called *With Pipe and Flute*, is printed as Prologue to this book. If the student will turn to it, he will observe that it consists of thirteen lines arranged in three sections; and that the second and third sections conclude with an unrhymed refrain which is itself a repe-

tition of the first few words of the first line. The scheme runs *aabba*, *aabR*, *aabbaR* (*R* standing for the refrain). The keynote, which is also the refrain, is struck in the opening "With pipe and flute." In the first section the music is calm and wondrous — of the rustic Pan; in the second the pipe and flute are stilled; in the third the poet contrasts with the raucous clangour of this mechanical day of ours the pipe and flute of the morning of things when the stars sang together for joy.

The *rondel* has fourteen lines; and it also is divided into three sections. The first has four lines, the second four, and the third six. The second and third close with a refrain which consists of the first two lines of the poem. The rhymes frequently run *abab*, *baab*, *ababab*: as in the following paraphrase of Horace's *Vitas Hinnuleo*, by Dobson, —

"You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother
Through trackless woods. If spring-winds sigh
It vainly strives its fears to smother; —

"Its trembling knees assail each other
When lizards stir the bramble dry; —
You shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother.

"And yet no Libyan lion I, —
No ravening thing to rend another;
Lay by your tears, your tremors by —
A Husband's better than a brother;
Nor shun me, Chloe, wild and shy
As some stray fawn that seeks its mother."

If we indicate the refrain lines by capitals, the scheme will appear as *ABab*, *baAB*, *ababAB*. Sometimes, however, the rhyme-scheme is varied to *ABba*, *abAB*, *abbaAB*; and the last line may be omitted.

The *triolet*, like the rondel, repeats not merely a snatch of a verse, but a whole line or two in its refrain. It consists of eight lines rhyming *ABaAabAB*, and it is desirable that the refrains be varied in sentence-structure or meaning. Here is a good example by our American poet, the late H. C. Bunner: —

"A pitcher of mignonette,
In a tenement's highest casement:
Queer sort of a flower-pot — yet
That pitcher of mignonette
Is a garden in heaven set,
To the little sick child in the basement —
The pitcher of mignonette
In the tenement's highest casement."

To a subtle handling of the refrain is due also much of the charm of the *villanelle*. This structure possesses a singularly graceful and soothing harmony, and is adapted to themes of serious and reminiscent mood, sometimes plaintive. It consists of five stanzas of three lines apiece concluded by a quatrain. The tercets run *aba*. The first line of the first tercet becomes the third, or refrain, of the second and fourth tercets: the third line of the first tercet reappears as the third line, or refrain, of the third and fifth tercets. Thus, in Dobson's exquisite verses *For a Copy of Theocritus*: —

"O Singer of the field and fold,
Theocritus! Pan's pipe was thine, —
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

"For thee the scent of new-turned mould,
The beehives, and the murmuring pine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

"Thou sang'st the simple feasts of old, —
The beechen bowl made glad with wine . . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold.

"Thou bad'st the rustic loves be told, —
Thou bad'st the tuneful reeds combine,
O Singer of the field and fold!

"And round thee, ever-laughing, rolled
The blithe and blue Sicilian brine. . . .
Thine was the happier Age of Gold!

"Alas for us! Our songs are cold;
Our Northern suns too sadly shine: —
O Singer of the field and fold,
Thine was the happier Age of Gold!"

The two refrains compose the final lines of the quatrain. They are the burden of the whole. The scheme may be represented as follows: A^1bA^2, abA^1, abA^2, abA^1, abA^2, abA^1A^2.

Ballade, Chant-Royal, and Pantoum. — The ballade, chant-royal, and pantoum are poems of greater length than the preceding, and they employ more than two rhymes. The refrain is still the characteristic feature. The *ballade* has greater potentialities than any other of the French fixed forms: it is sublime or humorous, subtle or naïve, stately, solemn, or ironical, but always graceful and melodious. It is capable of varied imagery and of rich and unexpected, but dignified, harmony. It consists of three stanzas of eight lines each, and a quatrain, called the *envoy*. The rhyme-scheme is *ababbcbC* for the first three octaves, and *bcbC* for the *envoy*. This last, according to former custom, was

addressed to some person of high degree, king or prince. An amusing example is Andrew Lang's

BALLADE OF MIDDLE AGE

"Our youth began with tears and sighs,
With seeking what we could not find;
Our verses all were threnodies,
In elegiacs still we whined;
Our ears were deaf, our eyes were blind,
We sought and knew not what we sought.
We marvel, now we look behind:
Life's more amusing than we thought!

"Oh, foolish youth, untimely wise!
Oh, phantoms of the sickly mind!
What? not content with seas and skies,
With rainy clouds and southern wind,
With common cares and faces kind,
With pains and joys each morning brought?
Ah, old, and worn, and tired we find
Life's more amusing than we thought!

"Though youth 'turns spectre-thin and dies,'
To mourn for youth we're not inclined;
We set our souls on salmon flies,
We whistle where we once repined.
Confound the woes of human-kind!
By Heaven we're 'well deceived,' I wot;
Who hum, contented or resigned,
'Life's more amusing than we thought!'"

ENVOY

"*O nate mecum*, worn and lined
Our faces show, but *that* is naught;
Our hearts are young 'neath wrinkled rind:
Life's more amusing than we thought!"

Another instance is the *Ballade of Heroes* which may be found at the beginning of Gayley and Flaherty's *Poetry of the People*, where it has been used as a Prologue. It will be noted that the *envoy* or message in those poems gathers up the thought and impresses the moral upon the person addressed. Three other forms of the ballade obtain, but they are not frequently employed: (1) Three ten-line stanzas with four rhymes each, *ababbccdcD*, and an *envoy* of five lines *ccdcD*, *e.g.* Swinburne's *François Villon*; (2) the ballade of double refrain running *abaBbcbC* three times, with *envoy bBcC*, *e.g.* Dobson's *Prose and Rhyme*; (3) the double ballade of six stanzas, the *envoy* sometimes omitted.

An elaboration of the ballade is found in the ***chant-royal***, examples

of which appear in the work of Dobson, Gosse, and Bunner. The scheme of this stately but infrequent form is 5 *ababccddede*, with *envoy ddede*, and refrain as in the single ballade. Of it no example can be reproduced here, but of the *pantoum* (singularly adapted to the dryly humorous treatment of a monotonous subject) the following will furnish a taste. It is from Mr. Dobson's *In Town*: —

"June in the zenith is torrid
(There is that woman again!)
Here, with the sun on one's forehead,
Thought gets dry in the brain.

"There is that woman again;
'Strawberries! fourpence a pottle!'
Thought gets dry in the brain;
Ink gets dry in the bottle," —

and so on, *ad indefinitum*, the second and fourth lines of one stanza recurring as the first and third of the next. For these, and for other French forms of verse not so frequently used in English, the student may refer to Alden's *English Verse*.

II. THE KINDS OF POETRY

The movement common to all poetry is determined by that mental ordering of the natural current of the subject which is rhythm. The different kinds of poetry, on the other hand, are determined by differences of subject-matter and of the channels through which that matter must pass in order to issue in expression. The subject-matter may be of objects, events, feelings, actions, or thoughts; and if these five dictated each its special poetical form, we should have to say that there were respectively these kinds of poetry: the descriptive, the narrative, the presentative or lyrical, the dramatic, and the reflective. But since we can express ourselves only by one or more of three ways, — singing, saying, and acting, — it follows that no matter how many kinds of subject there may be, the main divisions of literary expression are, and must always be, Song (the early or the modern lyric, especially of feeling), Recital (the poem of events in time, narrative; or of objects in space, descriptive; or of thoughts, reflective), and Drama. The ballad, the pastoral, and the idyll combine qualities of two or more of these kinds. As for satirical, didactic, and philosophical verse, they are on the border line between poetry and practical literature.

Beginnings of Poetry: The Choral. — Poetic kinds or types have originated in all countries, but not necessarily all in each; nor have all the stages of each kind persisted in any one country up to the present. The *choral song* cannot be produced in a civilized community,

with the characteristics which it possessed in days when a primitive community met to celebrate some event affecting all alike. Such an event was the outburst of war, a victory, a defeat, the propitiation of the gods, the completion of the harvest, the return of spring-tide, marriage, the initiation of the stripling into the order of warriors, or the funeral of a hero, — and then with dance and music, mimicry, gesticulation, and song, all gave utterance in unison to the feeling common to all. Nowadays the song or lyric is the utterance of personal and highly specialized emotion — more often the allusive suggestion of it than its definite relation in expression. In those days the crowd felt and moved and spoke as one person; the emotion was not highly spiritual, to be sure, but broad, readily understood, and universally felt, because it sprang from simple physical and social necessities common to all. Now one and now another voice would improvise a shout, a yell of communal joy or grief, in which all might join. Or, for the tune to which they danced and sang some monotonous refrain, formerly improvised, new words would here and there be suggested, to be caught from the lips by the chanting assembly; and so were added new verses to the choral song. Such chorals were characterized by infinite repetition of both words and melody; and by means of this infinite and nerve-racking round the crowd would, on occasion, work itself into some such frenzy as to-day marks the climax of a negro camp-meeting.

In the course of time one or another factor of the choral dance would, however, be separately emphasized. The mimicry, for instance, might drop away, and some individual would lead the crowd in a better ordered and more stately, if less spontaneous, psalm or hymn of praise. The medicine man or priest — or the college of priests — would add new words to the old incantation; perhaps, in time, largely recompose it. But since it was originally intended for the singing or listening crowd, though it finally might reach, by conscious artistry, the excellence of a *psalm* such as we find in the bibles of many races, it would still express the feeling of the folk and appeal to the folk as a whole.

Poetry of Recital: Ballad, Hero-saga, Gest. — In similar fashion the song-element and the rhythmic evolutions of the crowd might at times sink into abeyance, because somewhere in the assemblage some one had begun the recital of the deeds of the god or hero whom all were celebrating. Here, probably, was the birth — at any rate the germ — of hero-saga and popular ballad. These derived from the mother-choral qualities of lyric and drama, as well as of recital; but the narrative element was from the beginning to the fore. Just as in the case of the ceremonial hymn, and of the priest who recomposed and chanted it, the primitive recital would slowly develop into independent

existence by the instrumentality of well-fitted reciters, story-tellers, and mimics, probably also singers, the forefathers of the race of minstrels. If, at an early date, it passed under the influence of some chieftain's house, in celebration of whose ancestor it had been originally composed, it would survive as a *hero-saga*. If it celebrated men of humbler fame or less persistent descendants, it was more likely to vanish from memory, or to survive merely as a local *ballad*. But a ballad of merely local interest might naturally develop into something heroic, if the minstrel of later day saw its adaptability to the interests or "powers" of his generation. That the germs of hero-saga and ballad dated from primitive days we have evidence; and crude song-recitals of the kind are, even now, in the making among primitive peoples in various parts of the world.

Until the end of the fifteenth century English ballads could have been handed down only by word of mouth, and the word of mouth had been continually changing with the development of the language. Thousands of them may have run their course and dropped into oblivion before the invention of printing. Of course many of the ballads that survive from the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries betray the association of the maker with listening Knights and Ladies, or the country "Laird" and the learned "Clerk"; but others, even of late date, retain the characteristics of provincial life,—for the popular or 'folk' ballad is characterized by its naïve way of thought, mood, and expression, whether it be produced in pagan antiquity or in the seventeenth century after Christ. Artistic ballads, on the other hand, are made by individual poets. We have them from Coleridge and Macaulay, Rossetti and Dobson. But they display few of the qualities of the primitive or the minstrel ballad, qualities that could not outlive the conditions which gave them tang and currency.

The *traditional ballad*, then (traditional because popular), like *Sir Patrick Spens*, or *Otterbourn*, or *Lord Randal*, is a bit of history or romance or even myth, or a combination of them, in simple verse fitting a simple tune. It frequently possesses lyrical and dramatic qualities. Its subject is ordinarily local in interest, and its treatment is marked by naïve accumulation of particulars, repetition of statement, colloquial conversation, question and answer, set phrases and refrain. It appeals by pictorial images rather than by the poetic figure (or image consciously constructed); not by emotional analysis or refined suggestion, but by wave after wave of detail. It is the production of a civilization near the soil, dominated by common social, emotional, and artistic sympathies; and it is founded upon some interest that is permanent and universal in the heart of the community. Some primitive recitals have survived as simple and separate ballads; others, clustering, in the course of time, about a theme or hero of more abiding fame, have coalesced

into the *gest*, as, for instance, *The Little Gest of Robin Hood*. In this process the influence of the individual composer, editor, or compiler is occasionally noticeable; but, like each of its component hero-sagas or ballads, the gest is episodic, leaping capriciously from peak to peak of interest.

Epic, Heroic and Mock Heroic. — When many such developed sagas or gests — centring about some vital crisis, belief, or ideal of communities which have begun to thrill as one with the spirit of a people or folk — have been gathered into a still larger and more majestic whole, the epic is born. The great- or *folk-epic* may have qualities which appear to result from unconscious accretion of parts, generally anonymous, but it is hard to explain any great folk-epic as other than composite; that is, put together by a school of poets or an individual out of the naïve originals. Such folk-epics are the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Nibelungenlied*, and our English *Beowulf*. In a much later stage of civilization, when the spirit and conditions of communal feeling have disappeared before individual imagination and suggestion and a conscious effort at making works of art — the epic composed entirely by the individual appears. This lacks the simplicity and majesty of its predecessor. The folk-epic charms by the interest of its whole story and by its appeal to the whole crowd. The *individual epic* deals with a theme momentous, to be sure, but not of the heart warm, nor leaping from the lips of the people, — rather sought out by the poet wherewith to lift his readers (hearers no longer) to a nobler view of life. This kind of epic is either literary, like the *Æneid*, the *Divine Comedy*, and *Paradise Lost*, or didactic, like Pollok's *Course of Time*. It depends for its success upon the grandeur of its parts, its criticism of life, the conscious art of the poet, his magical images, and supremely poetic lines. In general it may be said that the folk-epic deals with traditions which command the credence of the people by and for whom it is composed, and that the individual epic chooses its subject with a view to inculcating an ideal, historical or spiritual. The *Beowulf* is an epic of tradition: the component parts commanded credence because they narrated events supposed to have recently happened, and the organized whole commanded the respect due to tradition. The *Paradise Lost* is an epic of the spirit; it tries to magnify into a universal ideal a definite creed of Christian theology. The series of epical episodes called *The Idylls of the King* holds up for the emulation of this commercial age an historical ideal, the chivalry of a vanished day. The epic in general, ancient and modern, may be described as a dispassionate recital in dignified rhythmic narrative of a momentous theme or action fulfilled by heroic characters and supernatural agencies under the control of a sovereign destiny. The theme involves the political or religious inter-

ests of a people or of mankind; it commands the respect due to popular tradition or to traditional ideals. The poem awakens the sense of the mysterious, the awful, and the sublime; through perilous crises it uplifts and calms the strife of frail humanity.

Even the modern epic poet refrains from emotion; from obtruding his personality upon his readers. So far as possible he obliterates himself. It is by virtue of a quiet and objective manner that he exalts his hearers to enthusiasm, a sense of the superhuman. His calmness enables him, after plunging the reader into the middle of things, to turn from the clash of gods and goddesses and men to the prologue of the unsophisticated little woman who frequently is found to have stirred up all the trouble; it enables him to dally with artistic grace over the various episodes of his story, to burnish with poetic skill the particular jewels of thought and speech that embellish the narrative. It is by means of these quiet digressions from the theme, if only they be not too sudden nor too prolonged, that the epic poet, delaying the *dénouement* of the tale, enhances its interest for his auditors. The epic recounts the deeds rather than the emotions of men. It is capable of higher impartiality, of more dignified impersonality, and consequently of more abiding interest and importance in proportion as it deals with the graver and more momentous relations of man with man and of man with God.

As to its form, like the hero-sagas, gests, or chansons from which it sprang, it was at first adapted to music: it was, if I may use the word, 'singable.' Then it was long recited, as to a chant. And later, when written to be read, it still retained the rhythmic or metrical form demanded by music and convenient for the memory; for rhythm inevitably facilitates and enhances the recital of significant thought. From the beginning the metrical form was not of the bard's caprice. Perpetuating the traditional glories of a people, the poem followed the prosody determined for epic narrative by the custom which national taste had made prevalent: the hexameter of the *Greeks*, the double trimeter of the *Nibelungenlied*, the alliterative verse of *Beowulf*, the septenar of *Robin Hood* (a ballad on its way to be an epic, that, however, never got beyond the wayside inn of the gest), and the blank verse of *Paradise Lost*. The epic metres are the gold-washed river-beds through which for centuries communal rhythms have flowed. Rich with historic deposit, they contribute to the poem just that color of association and familiar emotion which the epic poet must himself eschew.

Inferior to the epic in scope and majesty, and frequently of an adulatory character, is the *Heroic Poem*, such as Addison's apotheosis of the Duke of Marlborough in *The Campaign*. And absolutely opposed in conception to both of these, but aping for purposes of ridicule the style

movement, and grand intent of the epic muse, is the *Mock-heroic*, of which the best examples in English are Butler's *Hudibras*, and Pope's *Rape of the Lock*.

Tale, Allegory, etc. — The other forms of narrative poetry are the tale, the allegory, and the modern metrical romance. The first was carried to a point of wit, grace, and interest in the *contes* and *fabliaux* of France and the *fabelle* of Italy in the Middle Ages. It is represented in this volume by the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer. It deals not with heroes and supernatural agencies like the epic, but with the loves, trials, and adventures of everyday individuals in domestic or other non-heroic life; and it gives us a picture of manners and morals generally of the age in which it was written, although frequently the participants are of an earlier period. The *allegory* is a manner rather than a kind of literature; it makes use of the narrative form, epic or romance, simple tale, or even drama, for the purpose of conveying a lesson; it represents special abstractions, virtues or vices, under the guise of human beings, or, as in the old moral-play, imagines the course of Everyman in an action of which the characters are human qualities personified. The *Faerie Queene* is the noblest allegory in English poetry, rich with all the dignity, style, and stately imagery of the modern epic, but lacking the continuity and interest that attach to the recital of an actual and epic theme. Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* is the noblest allegory of our prose. The *modern metrical romance* deals with the career of individuals in extraordinary circumstances: those of adventure, wonder, devotion, heroism, etc. The background may or may not be historical. Poems of this kind are *The Lady of the Lake*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Byron's *Corsair*, and Moore's *Lalla Rookh*.

Poetry of Recital: Descriptive and Reflective. — The poetry of recital covers beside the narrative, also the descriptive and reflective kinds, — but these to be poetic at all must avail themselves more or less of the mood and method of the lyric. Narrative poetry, since its interest lies in the living and moving quality of events, has the right to be impersonal, showing no trace, if it please, of the feelings of the story-teller; but description, if limited to mere recital of objects lying side by side, would excite no more poetic interest than an auctioneer's catalogue; and a bare recital of a succession of thoughts, while it might be scientifically edifying, would appeal neither to the imagination nor the emotion of the listener. *Descriptive Poetry*, consequently, must show how the scene described affected the poet; or it must borrow the method of the narrator and relate the details of the scene in the order in which they impressed him. Upon the lyrical or narrative method, or both, depends the success of Cowper's *Task*, of Thomson's *Seasons*, of Denham's *Cooper Hill*, — the success of each successive sketch in the narra-

tive frame of Chaucer's *Prologue*, and of the details which suggest the reflections of *The Deserted Village*.

A study of the *Reflective Poems* in this volume, such as *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, *Tintern Abbey* and *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, will show that they also combine the spirit of the lyric with the manner of the descriptive or narrative recital. An absence of the emotional element would reduce the reflective poem, even though still imaginative in execution, to the level of didactic verse; and that can only by exception be called poetry. An excellent series of imaginative and emotive reflections loosely strung upon a very slender thread of narrative and gauded here and there with a lyric of great price is that anomalous work of art, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

The Poetry of Song: Choral, Lyric. — The choral song was the unpremeditated outburst of communal emotion. Its daughter far removed, the lyric of conscious art, is the product of individual feeling worked over in moments of tranquillity. In many cases the modern lyric poet seems to be singing to himself. His song, unlike the choral, is not necessarily to a musical accompaniment, but to the mere rhythm and tonality of words, to the harmony of rhyme and stanza. There is, of course, a communal purpose in the modern hymn or the patriotic lay intended to be sung or recited to, or by, an assemblage; but even here the poetic effects are produced by varied and artistic imagery and by progressive stimulus to the emotions rather than by the plain statement, often repeated, and the spontaneous emotion, of the early communal song. The personality of the primitive improviser singing first with, and later to, the choral throng was merged in, or modified by, that of the crowd which helped him to compose. The personality of a Byron or a Burns, on the other hand, is focussed in itself, independent and intense. Hence the emotional note of "Had we never met nor parted" and of "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon" — keenly conscious of self.

The *lyric of art*, then, is the expression of personal emotion in 'singable' or, at any rate, tuneful form. I say, at any rate, *tuneful*, for it is not at all easy to write a song that is singable, still less to write one that sings itself. Many of our best lyrics, although they *read* with rhythmic swing, fail of the vowel and consonant melody demanded by the singing voice. The best song-lyrics, like Burns's "My love is like a red, red rose" and "Should auld acquaintance be forgot" and Moore's "Believe me if all those endearing young charms" were crooned, in the making, to the fine old airs for which they were designed. The *Skylark* and the *Cloud* of Shelley, on the other hand, are not 'singable'; and still are none the less wonderful lyrics. What they lack in tonality they redress by rhythm, imagery, and subtle suggestiveness. The artistic lyric inclines to be somewhat restrained and thoughtful;

indeed on that account some of our noblest odes, Wordsworth's on *Immortality* and *Duty*, Dryden's, Tennyson's, and Lowell's, as well as elegies such as the *Lycidas*, though they speak a personal emotion, have been classed frequently among reflective poems. But they are merely the lyric of a self-repressive age.

The lyric does not tell a story, it presents or suggests the atmosphere of a story at some crisis of its career: and the career is of the poet's mood. To be effective the lyric must not be long; it may digress, it may proceed by leaps, but it must not relax the emotional strain. It must be easily grasped in mood and purpose. The imagery may be rich and allusive; but it is more generally simple; and it should never be profuse. The form, no matter how complex, must be graceful, pellucid, and polished *ad unguem*.

Kinds of Lyric: The Elegy, etc. — There may be as many kinds of lyric poem as there are moods to be sung and degrees of personal intensity in the singer. The broader social emotions, such as the religious and the patriotic, and those stirred by conviviality, and by public weal or woe, suggest the lyric of the communal type: the hymn, the lay, the social song, the national elegy or ode. Emotions that spring from and affect the interests of the individual, his loves and hates, fears, ideals, joys and griefs, give rise to songs and lyrics of the more intimate kind. The *elegy* is merely a reflective lyric suggested by the fact or fancy of death. The emotion, personal or public, finds utterance in keen lament, to be allayed, however, by tranquil consideration of the mutability of life, the immutability of Something that justifies life and death. Consider, for example, the elegies of Milton, Gray, and Arnold in this volume, and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, and his ode for the burial of Wellington. The ode as a structural form I have already treated in connection with the larger units of verse (Section 10).

Poetry by Action: Drama. — The third of the literary kinds sets before us persons living out what the narrative, descriptive, or reflective poetry of recital and the poetry of lyric emotion, together, may try to suggest, but cannot express. The poetry of recital and of song deals more or less with symbols; the drama *is* the fact. It is the artistic representation by way of speech and action of that which is significant in human life.

Subdivisions of the Drama. — The broadest division of the drama is into *Normal* and *Abnormal*. The Normal Drama treats of life as embodying positive principles and active forces; in short, as realizing a purpose; the Abnormal Drama looks on life as unprincipled, unregulated, or purposeless. The former subdivides itself into the Drama of Tragic and the Drama of Poetic Justice.

Tragic justice recognizes nothing but uncompromising Ideas. They

are the inspiration of character and the birth of impulse; they, in the emergency, compel to action; they pass as right and wrong into conduct; they precipitate the conflict of heroes, and they persevere till by death, physical or moral, the exponent of the false idea is quelled. Death, sometimes, too, befalls the protagonist of the right, but defeat does not befall the right for which he has done battle. Such is the justice that rules the realm of *Tragedy*. In such a realm Macbeth moves, and Hamlet, and Julius Cæsar. Tragedy purifies the emotions, deepening pity into sympathy, and lifting fear into reverential awe.

Poetic justice, on the other hand, while still it recognizes ideas as motive powers of life, does not regard them as uncompromising. It adjusts idea to idea, idea to situation, or situation to situation. In any case the forces in conflict are not irreconcilable; in every case the individuals impelled by ideas are mercifully dealt with. To the good falls good, to the evil, evil; but the punishment is tempered by mercy. On the stage of poetic justice may be found the Serious Play, the Romantic Play, the Play of Caprice. In the *serious play*, such as the *Merchant of Venice*, the ideas animating the central characters are still vital, and the interest of the spectator is enlisted fully as much for the success of this or that idea or principle, as for the fortune of the individual identified therewith. But though the alarum is sounded, though parties are ranged for conflict, and the outcome should be fatal, — though, even, injustice or inhumanity seem to triumph, — uncompromising individuals are thwarted of their purpose, disarmed in the nick of time: the catastrophe is averted by mediation. Right triumphs, wrong is rebuked; the virtuous are rewarded, the vicious punished and set in the way of repentance. In the *romantic play*, serious ideas still prevail; but it is no longer for an idea or principle, but for the fortune of a hero or a heroine, that interest is claimed. This is a "smooth tale, generally of love." It may avail itself of a villain, but he is artfully and opportunely eliminated; and the deserving lovers reap the fruition of their patience. Such a play is the *Tempest*. In the *play of caprice*, ideas or principles may exist, but they consort with whims, and they sometimes become whimsical themselves. The Play of Caprice is both humorous and witty: its truest and most genial humor is displayed in the *comedy of character;* its most elementary wit in the *comedy of situation;* a less genial humor and a more elegant wit are combined in the *comedy of manners*. Of course, there are characters worthy of remark in the comedy of manners, and there are manners worthy of consideration in the comedy of situation; but each sort is here designated by the element that is in the preponderance. *As You Like It* is a comedy of character; *The School for Scandal*, of manners; *The Comedy of Errors*, of

situation. *Comedy* amuses, corrects, and heartens. It shows that the vanities of life are not final, and the failures not always fatal.

Of the Abnormal Drama little need here be said. It is negative in thought, morbid in feeling, or chaotic in action. It occupies the realm of perversion, exaggeration, and nonsense: a realm in which the aims of life are parodied, the emotions distorted, or the relations of things ignored. Its classes are, accordingly, the Burlesque, the Melodrama, and the Farce. The *burlesque* may be satirical or sensational. In either case it works by negative means; but, in the former, it has a serious purpose; in the latter, it would merely provoke animal laughter. The *satirical burlesque* is the only excusable kind of abnormal drama. For even though its didactic aim overpass the bound of art, still it has a value. By inflating the trivial or exhausting the pretentious it ridicules and sometimes remedies abuses, literary, social, and political. Such satirical dramas are Beaumont and Fletcher's *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, and Sheridan's *Critic*. But in Shakespeare we find little satirical drama — merely an occasional trace of the burlesque in character.

The other kinds of the abnormal drama are beneath consideration. In so far as they lack idea, form, or perspective, they may be called negative. The *sensational burlesque* indulges in purposeless and inartistic caricature. The *melodrama* may intend to inculcate moral principles, but relying, as it does, upon exaggerated situations, irrational pathos, and vacant sensations, it is distorted in form and ephemeral in result. The *farce* (not the short comedy, which may be rational and artistic) is stuffed with sporadic situations, improbable whims, and inconsistent complications. The abnormal, or negative, drama is the *reductio ad absurdum* of life.

The *masque*, such as Milton's *Comus*, has the form and method of the normal drama, but it is largely allegorical in character. It presents mythological, symbolical, or broadly typical figures, and it subordinates the interest of action to that of spectacular effect.

On *Dramatic Technique* or *Plot-construction* many treatises have been written, some by philosophers like Aristotle, in the *Poetics*, some by playwrights like Freytag, some by professional critics. While acquainting himself with the more important theories, the student should beware of adopting one scheme as a key to every lock. Some elaborate systems are constructed with reference to but one or two kinds of drama, and are inapplicable to other kinds. Aristotle's analysis of plot, based upon the study of the Greek tragic dramatists, is the simplest, and with reference to it all others of importance have been constructed. He divides the tragedy into its natural parts, Complication and Solution. The Complication extends from the beginning of the action to the

Revolution (or Climax) — a reverse of fortune, or the discovery of a secret, or both. The Solution extends from the Revolution to the Catastrophe, or close, of the play. Freytag (*The Technique of the Drama*) finds in the tragedy three important Moments or Crises, and five Stages of action or development. The introductory scenes of the play constitute the first stage of action. They prepare the audience for the first crisis, the Moment of Impulse or Excitation, in which the purpose of the story, the nature of the coming conflict, is made manifest in speech or deed. The second stage is one of thickening plot and cumulative interest. It is the Complication. It includes an ascending series of situations, the last of which conducts the action to its Climax. Thus, the Climax of the play is, in a certain sense, the conclusion of the Complication, but it is also preparatory to the Solution, and is therefore a stage in itself — the third stage of action. It may consist of one scene or of several scenes. It conducts the Complication through the period of keenest excitement to the second crisis of the play. During the Climax one party or individual has triumphed; but the action is not complete, the Complication is still unsolved. In the second crisis the element of Solution is introduced. This crisis is therefore called the Tragic Moment, and it consists of some misstep of the victors or some decisive 'push' of the vanquished. The way is now prepared for the Solution — the fourth stage of the action. But since the rapid and hopeless fall of the hero would lack interest, as savoring too much of a foregone conclusion, there is generally held out a hope of his salvation, if not of his renewed success. This hope is, however, blasted in the Moment of Final Suspense, which is the third crisis of the play. From that moment to the close of the action is the fifth stage of action, the Catastrophe.

This analysis of technique does not apply, without modification, to comedy, for the humorous nature of its plot demands frequent ups and downs of development, and, at the end, a general *dénouement*, or unravelling, of the complication and an ascending movement instead of a catastrophe.

Mixed Kinds: Dramatic Monologue; Idyll and Pastoral. — As its name implies, the dramatic monologue partakes of qualities of the poetry of recital and the poetry of action. Browning has brought it to a high degree of perfection. Though the speaker is but one, as in *My Last Duchess* and *Andrea del Sarto*, the interlocutors are imagined to be two or more; their participation in the scene is indicated by the action of the speaker — his reference to their supposed gestures and remarks. Excellent monologues of this kind have been written by Tennyson also.

The *idyll* may be a diamond edition of any of the three poetic kinds,

— lyric, epic, or dramatic, — or a mosaic in miniature of different varieties of each. Its name, by derivation from the Greek εἶδος, means, according to some, a little 'type' or 'form'; according to others, a little 'picture.' The idyll is sometimes distinguished from other poems by the fact that it presents a picture; it is always distinguished from the major types of poetry by the fact that it presents the qualities of one or another of them, in a reduced and exquisitely delicate replica. The idyll of Theocritus, whether it be the Song of the Shepherd Thyrsis, or the epical tale of Castor, or of Heracles and Hylas, or the dramatic dialogue of the ladies of Alexandria, gathers all the honey of the comb into the compass of a single cell. I have said that the idyll does not always present a picture; the manner, however, is generally pictorial. It is as if the poet were illuminating literature with a brush. The analogy holds true, more particularly, of the idyll dealing with rural or pastoral scenes. In the twinkling of an eye the painter-poet has caught the color as well as the human interest of the scene. The process is so swift that man and nature are reproduced as one. It is not so much that nature seems to speak with a human voice, as that she wears the human air; she is enveloped in a human atmosphere. She invites communion, because man has communicated himself to her. Such pastorals as *The Book of Ruth*, Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, and all the rural idylls of Theocritus are little paintings, like the *genre* pictures of the Dutch School. They present a fragment of life, but they present it in every detail. The idyll may deal also with domestic, or social, even heroic, themes. The first kind is well represented by the Hebrew *Book of Tobit* or Burns's *Cotter's Saturday Night*. The social idyll may be of city or of court; it has been cultivated with great success by the Greeks and the French. The heroic kind is represented by the *Book of Esther* and by Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. The application of the term to the latter may be justified by both interpretations of the type. The *Idylls of the King* are an epic in a rose-window; each episode — atmosphere, scenes, images, and words — is stained with translucent color.

That the idyll is the product of a consciously artistic stage of civilization follows from what has been said. Even the simplest pastorals — much more the subtle elaborations of social and heroic themes — imply an effort on the part of the poet to return to nature, and by means of highly developed processes of art to emphasize such of her features as seem to him beautiful. The choral song and the primitive ballad are at one extreme of poetic art. They exist for natural expression and not adornment. At the other extreme is the idyll, which exists for adornment in minute detail and for personal expression of the mood with which the poet has invested nature.

On the Border: Verse, Satirical, Philosophical, Didactic. — Some literature in verse is on the border; some well over in the marches of the practical. The justification of poetry is in the independent and interesting quality of its creations. We know that its men and moods, its actions and thoughts, are imagined, but we regard them as real. They live in our imagination, and they move us by their beauty or deformity, their tragedy or pathos, their sublimity or humor. They come into our lives, but *they do not exist to change our views or ways of life*. If we learn from them, it is not that they have tried to teach, but that we have observed. The literature of satire, on the other hand, of philosophical and of didactic thought, has a further purpose than to entertain by the images and emotions that it creates. It aims to inform, to convince, to communicate a view, and to win us to the acceptance of it. Such literature may assume the form of any of the poetic kinds, — but it is not on that account poetry.

In so far as *satire* in verse stirs the creative imagination of the reader, or by any chance his unselfish and æsthetic emotion, it is of the House Beautiful. But though it use image and figure, rhythm, rhyme, and all the jewellery of art, if its end be to attack, to demolish, or even to reform and rebuild, it is not poetry. The clothes do not make the man. I do not say that satirical verse is not *belles-lettres*. *Personal satires* like Pope's *Dunciad* and Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* are graceful, witty, powerful, and polished contributions to 'letters.' One is garbed in mock-heroic form, the other in that of reflective recital. But they do not breathe the 'pure serene.' They may and do entertain; but they exist to convince. The true end of such satire is to castigate. Satire, when it is *social*, when its purpose is to reform manners, is less likely, indeed, to display animus, and therefore more likely to possess poetic qualities. Consider, for instance, Horace's *Satires* and the *Rape of the Lock* (a satire in mock-heroic form). But when social satire aims to correct vice, as in the verse of a Juvenal, it is an artistic sermon. *Political satire* is liable to the same restrictions as the social. It is well represented in English by Butler's *Hudibras* and Dryden's *Absalom and Achitophel*.

Versified Thought. — Of philosophical and didactic poems all that can here be said is that in the one, of which a good example is Wordsworth's *Excursion*, reflection sometimes rises to the imaginative expression of emotion, and then is poetic; that in the other, of which examples are Pope's *Essay on Man* and Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, the value — and it is very great — is almost altogether moral and rhetorical. Such poems are best characterized as versified thought.

12. THE JUDGMENT OF POETRY

In the section on the Purposes of the Artist, above, it has been said that poetry may be regarded as structural, presentative, representative, interpretative, and creative, and that the highest reach is attained when interpretation and creation are conjoined. Poetry should, however, be submitted to still other tests if a broadly critical judgment of it is desired. The degree in which the poem has won acceptance, the manner of its expression, classical or romantic, its view of life, the quality of its highest moments, and the effect produced by it upon the senses and the emotions, — must all be passed in review.

The Degree of Acceptance: Classic. — A *classic* is a poem whose position is above dispute. It has stood the test of time, is of *the* class. It has endured because it has had the power to appeal to the hearts and judgment, not of one crowd or coterie of men, nor of one country or period, but of all who have known it in all climes, through successive changes of literary fashion. And it has had this power of appeal because of its intrinsic truth, worth, and beauty. A classic then, like the tragedies of Æschylus and Sophocles, or of Shakespeare, like the epics of Homer, Dante, and Milton, has a meaning both real and exalted, a power to move men that is universal, a place that endures. And the poet who makes the classic we call a classic too.

The Manner: Classical, Romantic. — The manner of a poem or other work of art may be classical or romantic. The manner is *classical* in spirit when it conforms to authority, to the traditional and accepted belief concerning man's relation to the supernatural, to the necessity which orders personality and conduct and the issues of life. It is classical in style when it conforms to the conventional and therefore somewhat more rigid laws of expression; to the canons of taste handed down from of old, the regulations of type and figure, diction and metre sanctioned by usage, unquestioned because so long undisturbed. The manner is, on the other hand, *romantic* in spirit when it expresses the independence of the individual, the desire that springs eternal for freedom, the assertion of self as against creed and authority, and sleek and self-satisfied custom. "Our pent wills fret and would the world subdue," but since the conditions of life are unfavorable to the achievement of our ideals, the poet of romantic spirit transports us to a Land of Heart's Desire, where the stubborn facts of life are modified, and fate falls away and men are as gods. This is the republic of imagination. These are the meadows of love and heroism and wonder. In style, too, the romantic poet may "let olde thinges pase." If so, he gropes nature anew and glories in discovering and making some new thing, he ventures upon

variations of the ancient types, he eschews the critical canons as received, he devises for himself principles, he agonizes to invent metres and a 'spontaneous' diction. He succeeds in part; he could not possibly succeed *in toto*. The next generation finds that most of his inventions had been invented before, and that the only new thing under the sun is the old thing under new conditions. Still, while the romantic maker, the Marlowe, or the Peele, is in the flush of his making, he accomplishes much for which 'letters' must be grateful; he shocks the world into a new casting up of accounts, into a readjustment of canons and classics. Always there are followers who will run into excess, but a few — the Shakespeares, the Miltons — find the golden mean.

The long preëminence of Greek and Latin masterpieces accounts for the technical application of the term 'classics' to those literatures. For the same reason the term 'classical' is commonly used of the Greek and Latin manner and the authority derived therefrom. But in reality there are modern classics as well as ancient, and some of the poems that we call classical, because long established, like the *Odyssey* of Homer, were probably, in style at least, romantic to their first hearers. The *Iliad* is classical in spirit and in style, so too *Paradise Lost* and *Lycidas*. Pope's *Rape of the Lock* is classical in style, and so is the *Deserted Village*. The latter, however, verges on the romantic spirit. Macaulay's *Horatius* is classical in subject and I should say in spirit, but in style it is a romantic ballad. *The Lady of the Lake* and *The Ancient Mariner* are romantic both in style and spirit.

The View of Life: Idealistic, Realistic, etc. — We frequently hear literature called 'idealistic' or 'realistic.' Now no literature of the highest kind can be only idealistic or only realistic, any more than it can be only æsthetic. By *idealism* in art we should understand an effort on the artist's part to express the rightness or the wrongness of some view of life or some course of conduct. If the artist emphasizes this aspect of his subject out of relation to its other necessary aspects, its truth and its beauty, he passes from the studio to the pulpit. By *realism* we should understand an effort on the artist's part to express the exact or scientific truth about the subject presented; but if he overdoes this, in his painstaking honesty reproducing insignificant and unnecessary facts and details instead of those only that are necessary to the imaginative representation of the truth, his work will probably produce the effect of a haphazard photograph, purposeless and confused, or of some of Zola's novels or Walt Whitman's poems, or at the best of an ill-arranged text-book. By *æstheticism* we should mean the effort on the part of the artist to show the relation of his subject to the world of emotion, especially to the higher or artistic reaches of feeling, those capable of appreciating the beautiful, the sublime, the pathetic, the

comic, the tragic, etc.; but if nothing but emotions (actual or æsthetic) are portrayed or appealed to, the work results in sentimentalism. None of these extremes is to be tolerated in true poetry. Life must be treated by the poet as having a common relation to what is right or ideal, to what is true or real, and to what is emotional or beautiful. Absolute poetry expresses all three phases of the meaning of life, according to the purpose of the poet and the capability of the subject. The perfect poet, if ever there were one, would therefore be a sane, all-sided, and hospitable soul, seeing, feeling, and valuing things aright, and recounting the outcome in the artistic form specially suited to each subject in turn. It of course rarely happens that the poet and his subject together make for a treatment real, ideal, and æsthetic in equal parts. The proportion due to the conditions must be observed. *The Canterbury Tales* as a whole present the fitting *minutiæ*, the worth, and the æsthetic quality of their subject; but it is only natural that the *Prologue* should emphasize the reality of things — the detail of manners. *Comus* presents the ideal and æsthetic aspect of life rather than the realistic, for that was properly the end in view. *The Eve of St. Agnes* aims æsthetically to delight the emotions and imagination; it preserves the reality of appearances, but it has no particular ideal of conduct to emphasize, because the subject admitted of little, and the poet cared not a whit.

The Test Passage. — Matthew Arnold has suggested that in appraising poems we should test them by comparison with those lines, or passages, of the great masters of poetry in which men have agreed to recognize 'high poetic quality' — lines of unquestioned significance for truth, of high poetic seriousness, of inevitable beauty. While this could not possibly be a complete method of appraisement, for it deals with moments or parts and not with the accumulating momentum and the total effect, it is useful so far as it goes; and even more useful as suggesting a consideration even more vital to poetic appreciation. That, in substance and matter, style and manner, these best-of-all lines, these test lines or touchstones of poetry, have a mark, an accent of high beauty, worth, and power, Matthew Arnold says; but he refuses to define the mark and accent. "They are far better recognized," he says, "by being felt in the verse of the master, than by being perused in the prose of the critic." True, probably; but that is to reason in a circle. How can you be sure that what you have felt has been felt or should be felt by others if you know not why you yourself felt it? Unless you have some reason other than your liking, or the liking of those who have gone before, for choosing the 'touchstone' by which you shall test the relative worth of poetic productions, your 'touchstone' will not compel universal consent.

Now, if we examine the touchstones chosen by Arnold, we shall, I think, discover that they have a common characteristic not analyzed by

aim. If we determine that the characteristic is vital, we may demand it when we choose touchstones for ourselves. One of Arnold's test verses is "the simple, but perfect, single line" from Dante: —

"In la sua voluntade è nostra pace."

In His will is our peace. And another is from Milton: —

"And courage never to submit or yield,
And what is else not to be overcome."

The characteristic of each — so far as the thought goes — is that it holds, as if in balance, and perfect balance at that, the two extremes of the thought conveyed, and that each of these extremes, opposed as they are, contributes to the full significance of the whole. In the former test line the central thought is 'peace.' The thought is rich, full, and final because it holds in balance the conditions that in opposition could not make it, but that in harmony do; 'God's will' and *our* little wills. The former expressed, the latter suggested. In the second passage contrasted aspects of courage are held in solution; courage that in defeat confesses it not, courage that in conflict cannot be defeated. The mere style, moreover, of each of these passages displays rhythmical and musical form balanced in itself and suited to the idea expressed. 'Voluntade' balances in sound, as well as in sense, 'nostra pace.' Vowels and consonants hold a sequence through the line expressive of perfect unison. In the other passage, 'Never' matches with 'else' in sense and sound; 'courage' with 'overcome,' which is itself a climax to 'submit' and 'yield.'

This characteristic of the reconciliation of opposites in substance and style is the accent that marks all Arnold's touchstones. An artistic effect may be sometimes produced by suppressing one extreme, or even the higher balancing thought; but what is suppressed must be suggested. The presence of this characteristic explains why it is that every one chooses as a passage of inevitable poetry the stanzas in *Childe Harold* descriptive of the *Dying Gladiator*. Such lines as

"his *manly* brow
CONSENTS to death but CONQUERS *agony*,"

and

"He *heard* it, but he *heeded not* — his *eyes*
Were with his *heart*, and *that* was *far away*,"

and

"Butchered to make a Roman holiday," —

such lines express the significant thought in its aspects most opposed and yet most vital, and in the one emotive, imaginative, balanced, and rhythmical form appropriate to it.

The supremely poetic moment of just this quality abounds in the verse of Milton. In the *Comus* it inspires such lines as

> "Virtue could see to do what Virtue would
> By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
> Were in the flat sea sunk;"

and that fine strain beginning

> "A thousand liveried angels lackey her;"

and ending with

> "The unpolluted temple of the mind."

Wordsworth at his best gleams with lines jewelled in sound and sense, such as

> "The still sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, still of ample power
> To chasten and subdue;"

and

> "His little, nameless, unremembered acts
> Of kindness and of love;"

and, in the lament for Lucy: —

> "But she is in her grave, and, oh,
> The difference to me!"

and in every stanza of the *Ode to Duty* till we reach the stately conclusion

> "And in the light of truth thy bondman let me live."

The balance of the thoughts — opposed, yet reconciled — and of the component sounds is in all these lines perfect and manifest. So also in Coleridge: —

> "He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;"

and in Keats, as through the stanza opening,

> "Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird;"

and in Shelley, with every chord of

> "We look before and after
> And pine for what is not;
> Our sincerest laughter
> With some pain is fraught;
> Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

The last line of which reminds us of Tennyson's equally poetic

> "Sweet as remembered kisses after death;"

and

> " 'Tis better to have loved and lost
> Than never to have loved at all; "

and of that progressive resolution of discords: —

> " The old order changeth, yielding place to new;
> And God fulfils himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

Laid to the heart of humanity the supremely poetic line comforts and strengthens, rejoices, illuminates, and beautifies. As a test, the quality of poetic moments, the 'touchstone' is of decided worth. It must not, however, be applied to the exclusion of other tests which have in view the possession of the larger emotional effects, and the cumulative nature of the poem as a whole.

The Effect on the Senses. — If we consider the fact that images appeal to different senses of the reader as objects to different senses of the man perceiving them, we may deem it not improbable that the poet gains in excellence in proportion as he gives pleasure to a variety of senses: delighting not merely the sense of sight, for instance, but those of hearing and touch and taste and smelling — the perceptions of mass and movement as well. It will be noticed that Shelley appeals largely to vision and to what is called the motor sense; and that Keats indulges in images of color, touch, taste, and odor, more than most poets. An examination into the sense-appeal of poets demonstrates conclusively that the poet who, while varying his images, most fully and consistently delights the higher senses — hearing, for instance, vision, and the motor sense — is more likely than others to win the admiration of mankind. Shakespeare and Milton, for instance, awaken all the senses, but they specially appeal to the highest.

The Effect on the Emotions: Real and Æsthetic. — One of the characteristics of poetry as of all art is to awaken unselfish, that is to say, ideal emotion. The art which appeals to the senses alone, to taste and touch and the various carnal affections, can hardly be called art at all. It is one of the essentials of art that it should not arouse personal hungers and thirsts in order to allay them with practical and physical satisfaction. It should awaken desires and ideals which men may enjoy in common. It is not even sufficient that, rising beyond the appeal to the senses, it should appeal to such emotions as love or hatred, personal pity or terror; for here again the individual is interested. That which arouses the personal emotions may awaken a desire to possess that which is admired or to fly from that which is dreaded. Art must, therefore, make its appeal not to the senses alone, lower or higher, nor alone to the personal emotions, but to emotions which have no practical

bearing upon our everyday lives, no connection with selfish interests, but a significance that is universal, an aim that is ideal. These are the æsthetic emotions. They have no suggestion of a purpose; no result in action. The objects that produce them are felt, to be sure, but only after they have passed through the imagination. The emotions have a reality, but it is imaginatively expressed. The heart is affected, but it manifests its affection only indirectly. The æsthetic emotions are more delightful, the more likely to endure and to satisfy us, just because they do not call for any immediate choice, decision, or movement on our part; because they may be shared with others and may grow in intensity with social communication.

Gradation of Æsthetic Emotions. — The emotions may be graded in æsthetic quality according as they affect us less and less personally, more and more socially and ideally. The physically pleasant, the ugly, and the horrible, when presented in the drama, may cause the audience to enjoy or shudder in unison, but still it will arouse more or less of a physical sensation and interest in the individual spectator. This is the lowest grade of æsthetic pleasure — *on the border of the physical*. When, however, we witness the romantic adventures of a Rosalind or the comic misfortunes of a Malvolio, or the pathetic fate of a Desdemona, a higher grade of pleasure ensues. Nothing, or almost nothing, of the physical like or dislike is awakened. Our pleasure is not tarnished by personal desire or hate or horror. And yet though these emotions are more æsthetic than those produced by the physically pleasant, the ugly, and the horrible, there lingers a spice of personal interest. We take personal enjoyment in the romantic wooing of Rosalind, we are personally delighted by the contemptible failure of Malvolio, personally bereaved by the unmerited death of Desdemona. These, then, may be called the *individual æsthetic emotions*. The highest kind of æsthetic emotion, however, is the *universal*. Its kinds are all ideal. The beautiful in the masque of *Comus* or *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, the sublime in the career of Richard III, Coriolanus, Arthur, the tragic in the fate of Macbeth and Brutus, are enjoyed by us supremely because we in no way associate the beauty or the sublimity of the tragedy with the interests of our own little lives. We enjoy the harmonious blending of nature and spirit in the beautiful without a quiver of petty desire to possess the object of beauty. We contemplate sublimity in the course of a Coriolanus or an Ajax with no thought of our own insignificance in presence thereof. We suffer tragedy to play itself to the bitter close in Macbeth and Julius Cæsar and Othello, because we know that the power that shapes our ends is working for the universal good; and we enjoy the triumph of the right because we have ideally submitted ourselves to the ways of Providence. So the cardinal æsthetic

emotions are those awakened by ideal beauty, sublimity, and tragedy; and of these the master-poet most avails himself. With these he may combine the appeal to the more individual æsthetic emotions, the romantic, the comic, the pathetic. But he uses with great caution, and at his own peril, the emotions almost sensual, those allied with physical gratification, ugliness, and horror.

The judgment of poetry, then, takes into account the worth of the thought expressed and the magic of the expression, the universality of the appeal, the endurance of the creation. Poetry is real, æsthetic, and ideal: it must possess truth of spirit and adequacy of form; it must by its beauty move, and by its rhythms charm; and by its power compel. It is both interpretative and creative: it must therefore be judged by the fulness of its wisdom, the stature of its imagination. It adapts the laws and materials of speech to the higher needs of humanity; it must give large utterance to the individual soul, intimate communion to the general. Springing from nature, it has a message for that which is highest in nature, the unselfish heart of man. It enhances our joys and relieves our sorrows; it widens the bounds of sympathy, social, ideal, and artistic; and it must be judged accordingly.

CHARLES MILLS GAYLEY.

The table includes nearly all t
tioned in this book, except Gower (133
(1332–1400), and Chaucer (1340–1400)

The poets enclosed in a ( ) have no
book. Some of them, such as Wyatt and S
only an historical importance.

The authors whose names are printed in *ital*
also of great importance as writers of prose.

The horizontal lines, in the case of kings, indica
length of reign; in the case of the poets, they indicate
length of life. Thus, Henry VIII *reigned* 1509–1547;
Wyatt *lived* 1503–1542.

ENGLISH POETRY

PROGRESS AND MASTERPIECES

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BASIS

THE ORIGINS OF THE LANGUAGE

BEFORE entering upon the study of modern English poetry it will be wise to consider briefly the language in which that poetry is written. As we shall see, it is a language composed of elements which have been added one after another, as one race after another has come and seen and conquered upon British soil. We shall attempt merely to enumerate these conquests, leaving the student to fill in the story from his study of English history or the history of English literature.

1. The Celts and the Romans. — In the early westward migration of the races, the Celts made their way as far as the British Isles, and, several centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, had obtained entire possession of the country. In 55 and 54 B.C. the Romans under Julius Cæsar made two unavailing expeditions into Britain. A century later, in their career of Western conquest, they gained a military supremacy over the Celts, at least in the southern and more accessible portions of the island, and, to some extent, civilized the original inhabitants. But direct traces of early Celt and early Roman do not abound in our language, though the Celtic element, as we shall find, has had no slight influence in providing theme and spirit for future English poetry.

2. The Teutons (Anglo-Saxons). — When the Roman troops were called home, about 400 A.D., to defend the imperial city from the attacks of Teutonic invaders, the Celtic tribes in the north and west of Britain, taking advantage of the defenceless condition of the weaker Celts of the south, swooped down upon them and threatened to overrun the country. In their extremity the southern Celts called to their aid the Teutonic tribes dwelling upon the easterly shore of the North Sea

south and southwest of Denmark. These new allies, having performed the task assigned to them, concluded by taking the country for themselves, and after nearly four centuries of conquest gained complete ascendency, killing many of the original inhabitants of the island and pushing others into Cornwall, Wales, and Scotland. During the earlier portion of this struggle, probably in the sixth century A.D., some have placed the exploits of the legendary Celtic king, Arthur — a British hero destined to play no small part in future English poetry. The principal tribes of the Teutonic invaders were the Angles and the Saxons, from the former of whom are derived the present names of the country and of the language. This language, in its earlier form, was developed by the West Saxons, the finally dominant tribe, and in that earlier form is now denominated "Anglo-Saxon." It was the language of nearly all England for six hundred years, from the beginning of the fifth through the end of the tenth century. In the early part of this period the Anglo-Saxons were christianized, an event which not only added several hundred Latin words to the language, but also largely influenced Anglo-Saxon poetry. The wonderful Anglo-Saxon epic of *Beowulf* was composed while our ancestors were yet pagans, and before they had come to Britain. The first great Anglo-Saxon poem written in England was Cædmon's *Paraphrase of Biblical History*.

3. The Northmen. — During the ninth and tenth centuries certain Danish tribes—the Northmen, or Norsemen—gradually gained a foothold in England; and, in the early part of the eleventh century, they attained such strength that there was a short period of Danish rule. The consequent mingling of the Scandinavian tongue with the Anglo-Saxon no doubt modified the latter to a considerable extent, particularly as regards the spoken language. The fact, however, that both races were Teutonic makes it difficult to determine how great this influence really was. But a very important Norse influence was soon to enter by another channel. Upon the people of Gaul (France), originally Celtic, the Romans had imposed not only military rule, but also the fashion of the Latin tongue. This Latin speech continued to be the basic language of the French, though modified (1) by traces of the original Celtic tongue; (2) by the language of the Franks, — a Teutonic people who overran France and gave their name to the country about the time that the Anglo-Saxons were overrunning England; and (3) by the Northmen of whom we have spoken above. The onslaught of these last invaders was so successful that about 900 A.D. the French ceded to them a large tract of country in Northern France, which they called Normandy. They soon adopted the religion and the language of the Franks. The latter, however, was modified by contact with the native speech of the Northern conquerors.

4. The Norman French. — These Norman French, as the people of Normandy were called, having invaded England in 1066 A.D., succeeded in overthrowing the Anglo-Saxons at the momentous battle of Hastings, and in establishing dominion over the country. For nearly three centuries after this time there is displayed the singular spectacle of two great languages existing side by side in the same small island, neither of them very materially affected by the other. To the Anglo-Saxon, or English, the great body of the common people stubbornly held. The Norman French, on the other hand, was the language of the court, the nobility, the schools, the churches, and, to a large extent, of literature.[1] During the first hundred and fifty years after the conquest, English almost ceased to exist as a written language, since most of the poetry and much of the prose was the work of Normans. By slow degrees, however, the Normans severed their connection with their original home on the continent and began to coalesce more and more with the Saxon element of the island. By the end of the thirteenth century there were consequently evolved, in various parts of Britain, various Anglo-Norman dialects, from which our present language was destined to spring. Though we cannot discuss the matter here at any length, we may briefly say that in the composite language thus formed, the grammar and the more familiar words are Anglo-Saxon, while the less common words are Norman French, — that is, the Latin of Gaul as modified successively by Teutonic influences, first Frankish and then Norse.[2]

Summary. — This brings the story down to the beginning of the fourteenth century, the century which witnessed the first flowering of our modern literature. We have seen that the language in which this literature finds expression is a compound of an Anglo-Saxon or Teutonic element, and a Norman French or Latin element. Though the language has derived about the same number of words from each of these sources, we can readily understand why the Anglo-Saxon forms much the larger portion of any author's vocabulary; for its words denote the commoner objects of experience and relations of thought.

[1] Of course, no small proportion of the theological, scientific, and romantic writing of the time was in Latin; and this undoubtedly affected the spirit of our literature. But we are referring above especially to the development of the language; and upon this the influence of Latin has always been indirect rather than direct.

[2] This discussion has sketched the growth of our language only to the end of the thirteenth century. Since that time the language has been greatly enlarged, but this enlargement is due not to immigrations and conquests on the part of alien races, but to the new words brought in from other tongues by travel, by commercial and social intercourse with other lands, by inventions and discoveries, by new subjects and forms of thought, — in short, by the general growth and development of the people.

We have also seen how it came about that the Celts, the original occupants of Britain, now have their abode in the mountains of Wales and Scotland, in the peninsula of Cornwall, and in Ireland and the smaller adjoining islands, where, though they have had but little influence upon our language as a language, they have done much toward influencing the literature which it is a mission of that language to express. Finally, we have seen that the English nation, like the English language, is a composite, and can understand that the commingling of races in the "long period before the outburst of literature in the fourteenth century was an important element in the unconscious preparation for the later time." The admixture of racial characteristics in this period of growth has contributed much to the determination of qualities peculiar to all subsequent English poetry.

CHAPTER II

THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LANGUAGE AND THE BEGINNING OF THE LITERATURE

THE fourteenth century has been fitly called the most important epoch in the intellectual history of Europe. It was the century in which decaying feudalism began to give way under the pressure of a new social order. It was the century of the distinctively modern Italian writers, Petrarch and Boccaccio, the most notable representatives of a literature which has in manifold ways stimulated the mind of England to a corresponding literary activity. It was during this century that English poets ceased to be mere copyists of a foreign school, and that a new and original native poetry arose. It was during this century, also, that out of the Babel of conflicting dialects the present English language won its way.

At the beginning of the fourteenth century our language was at a critical stage of its development. It was at least certain that the basis of the language would be Teutonic rather than Latin. Little by little the Norman French had been banished from the schools, from the churches, from the law courts, from society; but as yet no national English language had come forward to take its place. Different dialects were spoken in different portions of the country — the Southern, the Midland, and the Northern English, the last of which was the parent of the modern Lowland Scotch, the tongue of Ayrshire and of Burns. In course of time, however, the English spoken in the eastern part of the Midland district — the language of Oxford and Cambridge, of London and the Court — drew to the front and attained a supremacy which it has never lost. One of the most potent agencies in fixing this dialect as the English of to-day, was the use made of it in fourteenth-century literature — by John Wycliff in his translation of the Bible, and by him whom many delight to honor as "the father of English poetry," GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

Contemporaneous with Chaucer were two other fourteenth-century poets, who deserve at least to be mentioned. WILLIAM LANGLAND

(1332–1400) was more than an ordinary poet, though he belongs, in both the thought and form of his poetry, to the age which was passing rather than to the age in which he lived. Far greater in his influence upon succeeding poetry was JOHN GOWER (1330?–1408), a scholarly, if somewhat prosaic, individual, who, writing in the same dialect, and dealing with the same themes as his distinguished friend Chaucer, served with him as a "fellow schoolmaster in bringing England to literature." But however interesting from a historical point of view, neither Langland nor Gower can for a moment be compared with Chaucer himself, who stands out easily as the first true artist in English poetry.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340?–1400)

It is a noteworthy fact that Chaucer, by two centuries the earliest of our greater English poets, is, at the same time, one of the greatest of *all* English poets : for critics unite in giving him a place among the five or six princes of our literature. His skill in the use of language, his sympathy with nature, his genial humor and keen insight, his intimate knowledge of men and things, his genius in the delineation of character, his delightful freshness and originality of view, — these particular qualities have perhaps never since been so happily joined in any one English poet outside of Shakespeare himself. Yet, interesting as we feel the man to be, and unremittingly as students have endeavored to search out the facts of his life, it must be confessed that our absolute information regarding him is unhappily limited.

1340?–1372. — Chaucer was born about 1340, in London, his father being a vintner, or wine seller, in fairly easy circumstances. We know nothing of the boy's early education, or, indeed, anything at all about him, until 1357, when we find him acting as a page in the household of the Duke of Clarence, third son of Edward III. He took part, as one of the duke's retinue, in a military expedition into France, where, in 1360, he was for a short time prisoner. For several years after this date all trace of him is again lost; but in 1367 we find him installed as a valet of the King's Chamber, an office which he had doubtless been holding for some time, and which he continued to hold till 1372. During this period he commenced to write verse, and produced the *Compleynte unto Pitie* and the *Boke of the Duchesse*, both of which appeared before 1370, and, in the opinion of most critics, show traces of French influence. About this time his marriage took place; just when is uncertain, but, at any rate, sometime between 1366 and 1374. We also know that he left at least one child.

1372–1386. — In 1372, when thirty-two years of age, Chaucer was sent on a diplomatic mission to Italy; and while there became acquainted with the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. This journey and its results are of vital importance, both to Chaucer and to English poetry. It is at this point that our literature is first affected by the dominant influence of Italy; and it is by this same influence that the growing powers of our first real poet were strengthened and directed. During this period many of his best poems were written, — among others, the *Hous of Fame*, the *Legende of Good Women*, and the *Troilus and Criseyde*. During this period, also, the poet was very active in the affairs of the world. We hear of him as, successively, Comptroller of Customs, Ambassador on various foreign missions, and, finally, Member of Parliament for Kent. Few makers of English literature have been so prominent in public activities.

1386–1400. — Near the close of 1386, a change in political fortunes brought to Chaucer the loss of his offices, and reduced him suddenly from affluence to comparative poverty. In this period of enforced leisure, the plan of *The Canterbury Tales* seems to have shaped itself in his mind; and between 1387 and 1390 were probably written not only the *Prologue*, but also the best and largest portion of the *Tales*. The last ten years of Chaucer's life were the least productive of literary result. The *Tales*, which he had planned on a splendid scale, were not yet one-fifth completed; yet he added only three between 1390 and 1400. Sometimes he was in comfortable circumstances, more often in want and dependent upon the bounty of the king. In the latter part of 1400 the kindly poet and noble-hearted gentleman died. He was the first of English poets to be honored by burial in Westminster Abbey.

Though most of Chaucer's effort was directed to the telling of stories, a task in which he has succeeded so well that Stopford Brooke pronounces him "our greatest story-teller in verse," still most readers of to-day would undoubtedly prefer, to even the best of his stories, that wonderful gallery of fourteenth-century portraits known as the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*. Of this one critic has gone so far as to say, "There is no writing like that of the *Prologue* in all English literature, save in Shakespeare." And, indeed, in its freshness and beauty and the vivid colors of its "lively portraiture," it takes rank with the very best of its kind. Aside from the *Prologue* the student will probably find the *Knightes Tale* and the *Nonne Preestes Tale* of greatest interest.

THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury

N.B. — In Chaucer there are as many syllables as there are vowels or diphthongs, except when the vowel or diphthong is elided or suppressed. These elisions or suppressions, which happen very frequently in the case of *e* and occasionally of other vowels, are marked in this text by *italics*.

The influences of the breezy April

WHAN that Aprílle with his shoures sote
The droght*e* of March*e* hath perced to the rote,
And bathed ev*e*ry veyn*e* in swich licóur,
Of which vertú engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in ev*e*ry holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodyë,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem natúr*e* in hir coráges):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couth*e* in sondry londes;
And specially, from ev*e*ry shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they wer*e* seke

The arrangement for a pilgrimage to be made in company

Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay

Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corâge,
At night was come in-to that hostelryë
Wel nyne and twenty in a companyë,
Of sondry folk, by âventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That tôward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed âtte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.

An introduction to the character sketches that follow

But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resôun,
To telle yow al the condicióun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;
And eek in what array that they were inne:
And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

The Knight

A KNIGHT ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalryë,
Trouthe and honôur, fredôm and curteisyë.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And ther-to hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as in hethenesse,
And ever honôured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.

In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmaryë.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalyë,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foghten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryës, and ay slayn his fo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somtyme with the lord of Palatyë,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkyë:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And thogh that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he ne was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipóun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

The Squyer

With him ther was his sone, a yong SQUYÉR,
A lovyere, and a lusty bachelér,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his statúre he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachyë,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardyë,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.

Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singinge he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his goune, with sleves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.
He coude songes make and wel endyte,
Juste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte.
So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
He sleep na-more than dooth a nightingale.
Curteys he was, lowly, and servisáble,
And carf biforn his fader at the table.

The Yeman

A YEMAN hadde he, and serváunts na-mo
At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
Under his belt he bar ful thriftily,
(Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
A not-heed hadde he, with a broun viság.
Of wode-craft wel coude he al the uságe.
Upon his arm he bar a gay bracér,
And by his syde a swerd and a bokelér,
And on that other syde a gay daggére
Harnéised wel, and sharp as point of spere;
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

The Prioresse

Ther was also a Nonne, a PRIORESSE,
That of hir smyling was ful symple and coy;
Hir gretteste ooth was but by sëynt Loy;
And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.

Ful wel she song the servicë divyne,
Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
After the scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe,
For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe
That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
In curteisye was set ful moche hír lest.
Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
And sikerly she was of greet desport,
And ful plesaunt, and amiáble of port,
And peyned hir to countrefete chere
Of court, and been estatlich of manére,
And to ben holden digne of reverence.
But, for to speken of hir conscience,
She was so charitáble and so pitóus,
She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.
But sore wepte she if oon of hem were deed,
Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
And al was conscience and tendre herte.
Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
Hir nose tretýs; hir eyen greye as glas;
Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
Of smal corál aboute hir arm she bar
A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;

And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
On which ther was first write a crowned A,
And after, *Amor vincit omnia.*

The Nonne and the three Preestes

Another NONNE with hir hadde she,
That was hir chapeleyne, and PREESTES three.

The Monk

A MONK ther was, a fair for the maistryë,
An out-rydére, that lovede veneryë;
A manly man, to been an abbot able.
Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,
Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
The reule of seint Maure or of seint Benéit,
By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
And heeld after the newe world the space.
He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith that hunters been nat holy men;
Ne that a monk, whan he is recchelees,
Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees;
This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,
Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
Or swinken with his handes, and labóure,
As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
Therfore he was a pricasour aright;
Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight;
Of priking and of hunting for the hare
Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.

I seigh his sleves purfiled at the hond
With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
And eek his face, as he had been anoint.
He was a lord ful fat and in good point;
His eyën stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
Now certeinly he was a fair prelát;
He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.
A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
His palfry was as broun as is a berye.

The Frere

A FRERE ther was, a wantown and a merye,
A limitour, a ful solempne man.
In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
So moche of daliaunce and fair langage.
He hadde maad ful many a mariage
Of yonge wommen, at his owene cost.
Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
Ful wel biloved and fámuliér was he
With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
For he had powër of confessióun,
As seyde him-self, more than a curát,
For of his ordre he was licentiat.
Ful swetely herde he confessióun,
And pleasaunt was his absolúcióun;
He was an esy man to yeve penáunce
Ther as he wiste to han a good pitáunce;
For unto a poure ordre for to yive
Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt.

For many a man so hard is of his herte,
He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.
Therfore, in stede of weping and preyéres,
Men moot yeve silver to the poure freres.
His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
Wel coude he singe and 'pleyen on a rote.
Of yeddinges he bar outrely the prys.
His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
And everich hostiler and tappestere
Bet than a lazar or a beggestere;
For un-to swich a worthy man as he
Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
To have with seke lazars áqueyntáunce.
It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
Fór to delen with no swich poraille,
But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse;
Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
He was the beste beggere in his hous;
For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
So pleasaunt was his "*In principio*,"
Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.
In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe;
For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
With a thredbar cope, as is a poure scolér,
But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
Somwhat he lipsed, for his wantownesse,
To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
And in his harping, whan that he had songe,

His eyën twinkled in his heed aright,
As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Hubérd.

The Marchant

A MARCHANT was ther with a forked berd,
In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bevere hat;
His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
His resons he spak ful solempnely,
Souninge alway thencrees of his winníng.
He wolde the see were kept for any thing
Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
So estatly was he of his governaunce,
With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

The Clerk of Oxenford

A CLERK ther was of Oxenford also,
That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.
As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
For he had geten him yet no benefice,
Ne was so worldly for to have office.
For him was lever have at his beddes heed
Twénty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
Of Aristotle and his philosophyë,
Than robes riche, or fithel, or gay sautryë.
But al be that he was a philosóphre,
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,

On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
And bisily gan for the soules preye
Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
Noght o word spak he more than was nede,
And that was seyd in forme, and reverence,
And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

The Sergeant of the Lawe

A SERGEANT OF THE LAWE, war and wys,
That often hadde been at the parvys,
Ther was alsó, ful riche of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
Justyce he was ful often in assyse,
By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
For his science, and for his heigh renoun,
Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.
Al was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was.
In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
That from the tyme of king William were falle.
Ther-to he coude endyte, and make a thing,
Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

The Frankeleyn

A FRANKELEYN was in his companyë;
Whyt was his berd, as is the dayës-yë.

Of his complexioun he was sangwýn.
Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
For he was Epicurus owene sone,
That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
Was verraily felicitee parfyt.
An housholdére, and that a greet, was he;
Seint Julian he was in his contree.
His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plentevous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
So chaunged he his mete and his sopér.
Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.
Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were
Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
His table dormant in his halle alway
Stood redy covered al the longe day.
At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
An anlas and a gipser al of silk
Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;
Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

The Haberdassher, the Carpenter, the Webbe, the Dyere, and the Tapicer

An Haberdassher and a Carpenter,
A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapicer,
And they were clothed alle in o liveree,
Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;
Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,

But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.
Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
Was shaply for to been an alderman.
For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
And elles, certein, were they to blame.
It is ful fair to been y-clept "*madame*,"
And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

The Cook

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones,
To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones
And poudre-marchant tart and galingale.
Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and fryë,
Máken mortreux, and wel bake a pyë.
But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
For blankmangér, that made he with the beste.

The Shipman

A Shipman was ther, woning fer by weste:
For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,
In a goune of falding to the knee.
A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.
Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
Of nyce conscience took he no keep.

If that he faught, and hadde the hyër hond,
By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,
Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartáge.
Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
With many a tempest hadde his berd ben shake.
He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,
And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

The Doctour of Phisyk

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisyk,
In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk,
To speke of phisik and of surgeryë;
For he was grounded in astronomyë.
He kepte his paciënt a ful greet del
In houres, by his magik naturel.
Wel coude he fortunen thë ascendént
Of his imáges for his paciënt.
He knew the cause of everich maladyë,
Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or dryë,
And where engendred, and of what humóur;
He was a verrey parfit practisour.
The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
For ech of hem made other for to winne;
Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
Wel knew he the oldë Esculapius,
And Deïscorides, and eek Rufus,
Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
Averrois, Dámascien, and Constantyn;

Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
Of his diete mesuráble was he,
For it was of no superfluitee,
But of greet norissing and digestíble.
His studie was but litel on the Bible.
In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
Lyned with taffata and with sendál;
And yet he was but esy of dispence;
He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
For gold in phisik is a cordial,
Therfore he lovede gold in special.

The Wyf of Bathe

A good Wyf was ther of bisyde Bathe,
But she was som-del deef, and that was scathe.
Of clooth-makíng she hadde swiche an haunt,
She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
That to the offríng bifore hir sholde goon;
And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
That she was out of alle charitee.
Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
Boold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
She was a worthy womman al hir lyve;
Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
Withouten other companye in youthe;
(But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe).
And thryës hadde she been at Jerusalem;
She hadde passed many a straunge streem;
At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
In Galice at seint Jame, and at Coloigne.
She coude muche of wandring by the weye.
Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.

Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
A foot-mantél aboute hir hipes large,
And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe
Of remedyes of love she knew per-chaunce,
For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

The Poure Persoun

A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a poure PERSOUN of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thoght and werk.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
His parisshens devoutly wolde he teche.
Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
And in adversitee ful paciënt;
And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
Un-to his poure parisshens aboute
Of his offring, and eek of his substáunce.
He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
And this figúre he added eek ther-to,
That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
And shame it is, if a preest take keep,

A [dirty] shepherde and a clene sheep.
Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
By his clennesse, how that his sheep shold live.
He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
And ran to London, un-to sëynt Poules,
To seken him a chaunterye for soules,
Or with a bretherheed to been withholde;
But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;
He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
And though he holy were, and vertuous,
He was to sinful man nat despitous,
Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
But in his teching discreet and benigne.
To drawen folk to heven by fairnesse
By good ensample, was his bisinesse:
But it were any person obstinat,
What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

The Plowman

With him ther was a PLOWMAN, was his brother,
That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
A trewe swinker and a good was he,
Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
God loved he best with al his hole herte
At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve.
He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
For Cristes sake, for every poure wight,
Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.

His tythes payëd he ful faire and wel,
Bothe of his propre swink and his catél.
In a tabárd he rood upon a mere.

The Remaining Characters

Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were na-mo.

The Miller

The MILLER was a stout carl, for the nones,
Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
Ther was no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
And ther-to brood, as thogh it were a spade.
Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
His mouth as greet was as a greet fornéys.
He was a jangler and a goliardeys,
And that was most of sinne and harlotryës.
Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryës;
And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

The Maunciple

A gentil MAUNCIPLE was ther of a temple,
Of which achatours mighte take exemple
For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.

For whether that he payde, or took by taille,
Algate he wayted so in his achat,
That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
The wisdom of an heep of lerned men?
Of maistres hadde he mo than thryës ten,
That were of lawe expert and curious;
Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,
Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
Of any lord that is in Engelond,
To make him live by his propre good,
In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
And able for to helpen al a shire
In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

The Reve

The Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
Y-lyk a staf, there was no calf y-sene.
Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayëryë,
His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultryë,
Was hoolly in this reves governing,
And by his covenaunt yaf the rekening,
Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
Ther coude no man bringe him in arreráge.
There nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyne;

They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
His woning was ful fair up-on an heeth,
With grene treës shadwed was his place.
He coude bettre than his lord purchace.
Ful riche he was astored prively,
His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly;
To yeve and lene him of his owene good,
And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
In youthe he lerned hadde a good mistér;
He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,
That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,
Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

The Somnour

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
That hadde a fyr-reed cherubinnes face,
For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
[And quyk] he was, and [chirped] as a sparwe;
With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;
Of his visage children were aferd.
Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimstoon,
Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
Ne oynement that wolde clense and byte,
That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
That he had lerned out of som decree;

No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
And eek ye knowen wel, how that a jay
Can clepen "Watte," as wel as can the pope.
But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophyë;
Ay "*Questio quid iuris*" wolde he cryë.
He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
A good felawe to [have his wikked syn]
A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
And if he fond o-wher a good feláwe,
He wolde techen him to have non awe,
In swich cas, of thë erchedeknes curs,
But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
For in his purs he sholde y-punisshed be.
"Purs is the erchedeknes helle," seyde he.
But wèl I woot, he lyëd right in dede;
Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede —
For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth —
And also war him of a *Significavit*.
In daunger hadde he at his owene gyse
The yonge girles of the diocyse,
And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

The Pardoner

With him ther rood a gentil PARDONER
Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,
That streight was comen fro the court of Romë.
Ful loude he song, "Com hider, love, tó me."
This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
But smothe it heng, as dooth a stryke of flex;

By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
But hood, for jolitee, ne wered he noon,
For it was trussed up in his walét.
Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe jet;
Dischevelee, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
Bret-ful of pardon come from Rome al hoot.
A voys he hadde as smal as eny goot.
No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;
I trowe [his cheke and eek his chin were bare.]
But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:
He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
That sëynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
Up-on the see, til Jesu Crist him hente.
He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
A poure person dwelling up-on lond,
Up-on a day he gat him more moneyë
Than that the person gat in monthes tweyë.
And thus, with feyned flatery and japes,
He made the person and the peple his apes.
But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
But alderbest he song an offertórie;
For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
Therefore he song so merily and loude.

Chaucer's statement of his purpose

Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
Why that assembled was this companyë
In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelryë,
That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
But now is tyme to yow for to telle
How that we baren us that ilke night,
Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
And after wol I telle of our viáge,
And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.

His justification of any possible coarseness or defects in his poem

But first I pray yow, of your curteisyë,
That ye narette it nat my vileinyë,
Thogh that I pleynly speke in this matére,
To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes proprely.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewe,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.

The Host and his plan for entertaining the pilgrims

Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyën stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Boold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhood him lakkede right naught.
Eek ther-to he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges;
And seyde thus: "Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lyë,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companyë
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
"Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely, confórt ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my jugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.

Hold up your hond, withouten more speche."
Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,
And graunted him withouten more avys,
And bad him seye his verdit, as him leste.
"Lordinges," quod he, "now herkneth for the beste;
But take it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
This is the point, to speken short and pleyn,
That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
In this viáge, shal telle tales tweye,
To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
Of áventúres that whylom han bifalle;
And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
Tales of best senténce and most solas,
Shal have a soper at our aller cost
Here in this place, sitting by this post,
Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
And for to make yow the more mery,
I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
Right at myn owene cost, and be your gyde.
And who-so wol my jugement withseyë
Shal paye al that we spenden by the weyë.
And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
And I wol erly shape me therfore."

The acceptance of the Host's proposal

This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
And that he wolde been our governour,
And of our tales juge and réportour,
And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
And we wold reuled been at his devys,
In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
We been acorded to his jugement.

And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon ;
We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
With-outen any lenger taryinge.

The morrow, and the prosecution of the plan

A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
Up roos our hoste, and was our aller cok,
And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
And forth we ride*n*, a litel more than pas,
Un-to the watering of seint Thomás.
And there our host bigan his hors areste,
And seyde ; " Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.
Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
If even-song and morwe-song acorde,
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale.
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
Who-so be rebel to my jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne ;
He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
Sire knight," quod he, " my maister and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
Cometh neer," quod he, " my lady prioresse ;
And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,
Ne studieth noght ; ley hond to, every man."
Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
Were it by áventúre, or sort, or cas,
The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,
Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight ;
And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
By forward and by composicioun,
As ye han herd ; what nedeth wordes mo?
And whan this gode man saugh it was so,
As he that wys was and obediënt
To kepe his forward by his free assent,

He seyde: "Sin I shal biginne the game,
What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seyë."
And with that word we riden forth our weyë;
And he bigan with right a mery chere
His tale anon, and seyde in this manére.

Here endeth the prolog of this book.

CHAPTER III

THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

THE IMITATORS OF CHAUCER; THE RENAISSANCE; THE PRINTING PRESS; THE BALLAD

The fifteenth century is ordinarily regarded as the most barren period in English literary history. It is true that the century produced no poet who can be considered in any way comparable with Chaucer, or who may be regarded as having any place among the greater English poets. Various explanations for this literary inactivity have been suggested. Some believe that it was owing to the distracting influence of the civil and foreign wars which so largely make up the history of the age; others, that the intellectual energies of the nation were too largely centred in an effort to discard, once for all, the mediæval fashion of thought and expression — the lifeless formalities of tradition — and to fit itself out anew with the free and flowing garments of culture and romance presented by the Italian Renaissance.

However, this period, though barren of great poets, is by no means unimportant in the historical development of our poetry. In the first place its literary judgment was sufficiently true to recognize in a Chaucer the master that he was. A considerable school of imitators followed him, both in Scotland, where the productions at times attain to a really high standard, and in England, where the verse, though of third-rate excellence, did much to preserve Chaucer's standard of poetic style, and to insure the permanence and the nationalization of the East Midland dialect which he had used.

More important than the actual literary output of this period is the wonderful intellectual impulse which England was beginning to receive through the inspiration of the Renaissance. Many new schools were organized. Oxford and Cambridge grew apace. The great universities of Scotland sprang up. The literature of the classics was studied, and the taste and culture of ancient Greece and Rome again became the possession of the world. The scholasticism of the Middle Ages, with its musty and pedantic controversies concerning matters of no actual significance, shrivelled away before the vivifying and illuminat-

ing blaze of the new learning. Finally the mediæval romantic poetry, by whose influence France had dominated English letters to the time of Chaucer, gave place to a poetry dominated for nearly three centuries by the influence of Italy.

But one event of the fifteenth century has played a greater part than any other — perhaps greater than all others combined — in the development of literature. The printing press was invented in Germany near the middle of the century, and was brought into England by Caxton about 1476. In our present day of many books it is hard to imagine the situation that had existed before printing lent its aid to the dissemination of thought. After 1476 it was for the first time possible in England that the world of letters might become the actual possession of the world of men. Among the hundred volumes that came from Caxton's press were two or three editions of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, as well as the *Morte Darthur* of Sir Thomas Malory, a splendid work in prose, which, as we shall see, was destined to be the forerunner of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

As has been said, no English poets of the fifteenth century attained to any considerable eminence. But in spite of this fact the literary importance of this period will be apparent when we note that, in all probability, this was the especial springtide of most of our finest old English ballads. While, therefore, the more formal and artistic poetry was absent, this popular lyric strain in English verse reached a higher level than any to which it had previously risen. As a factor in awakening the poetic sensibilities of the whole people, in increasing the flexibility of English verse forms, and in furnishing, through their sincerity and directness and simplicity, a model for all subsequent "literary" poets, the importance of these ballads cannot easily be overestimated. They are, for the most part, the work of unknown authors, — unwritten songs from the heart of the people, handed down from generation to generation. Constantly added to, constantly changing, they appear as a growth, rather than a conscious literary production; and they are a growth for which much credit must be given to this so-called "barren" fifteenth century.

CHAPTER IV

THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

1. THE PRE-ELIZABETHAN ERA — A PERIOD OF PREPARATION

The Renaissance in England bore fruit more tardily than in most other European countries. Here, both in the fifteenth century and in the early part of the sixteenth, there was in existence a process of absorption and unconscious growth, sooner or later destined to find expression in a new English literature. Presently, under the impulse of these influences, poetry began to assume the form and spirit of modern English verse. As we have seen, the prime stimulus was derived from Italy; and with two English noblemen, Italian travellers and scholars, this new poetry really had its origin. These students of the literary art of Italy were Sir Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey. Though neither of the two can in any sense be considered an eminent poet, still their influence on our literature was so opportune that they deserve at least a passing glance.

Wyatt (1503–1542) was a native of Kent and a graduate of Cambridge. He was a favorite at the court of Henry VIII, and was sent by the king on numerous missions to foreign countries. This life familiarized him with the best literature of the time and did much to develop his style; for Wyatt was very early a maker of verse. He experimented with many forms of rhyme and metre, the most important of which was the sonnet, a stanza devised by Petrarch, the sweet Italian lyrist of the fourteenth century. To Wyatt, accordingly, the English language owes what has always been regarded as one of its most expressive and harmonious verse forms.

Surrey (1518–1547) was both friend and disciple of Wyatt. He was educated at Oxford, became popular at court, served with distinction in a war with France, travelled and studied in Italy. At length, falling under the displeasure of King Henry, he was accused of treason and beheaded at the early age of twenty-nine. Though less serious and thoughtful than Wyatt, he shows in his poetry a livelier wit and a more delicate fancy. He not only tried his hand at practically all the metres which his master had attempted, but went farther by adding one which has proved of the very highest importance in English poetry, — the

iambic pentameter blank verse. It is barely possible that Surrey invented this verse form, but more probable that he adopted it from the Italians, among whom it was just coming into use. He employed it in his translation of the second and fourth books of Virgil's *Æneid*; it was soon adopted by Sackville in the versification of *Ferrex and Porrex*, the first regular English tragedy; it was later developed by Marlowe, the earliest of the greater Elizabethan dramatists; and it was finally brought to its perfection in the "dramatic blank" of Shakespeare's plays and in the "epic blank" of Milton's longer poems.

Undoubtedly Wyatt and Surrey never thought of publishing their poems; nor did the general public know of these verses until Surrey had been dead ten, and Wyatt fifteen, years. It was at this time that a printer by the name of Richard Tottel brought out a collection of poems, worthy of our attention as the first of the kind in modern English poetry. Of this collection, *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557), nearly one hundred poems were written by Wyatt, about forty by Surrey, and not far from a hundred and fifty by various and "uncertain authors." By this volume the English world was introduced to a species of poetry entirely new, not only in form, but also in subject and in treatment. The poems were nearly all lyrics, many of them sonnets, intensely personal, and written on the subject of the joys and sorrows of their authors' loves. But by means of this book a new standard was set for English verse, the preparation of a century and a half had borne its fruitage, and the "Elizabethan age" was ushered in.

2. THE ELIZABETHAN AGE — THE FIRST GREAT CREATIVE PERIOD

The first twenty years after the accession of Elizabeth, in 1558, are, to a great extent, years of experiment in literature, rather than years of actual performance. In all departments of literary production — prose, the drama, and non-dramatic poetry — we see these experiments everywhere in progress, and instinctively feel that their success is near at hand. Circumstances were now favorable for the active outburst of the mighty forces which England had been storing up for the past two centuries. The people were prosperous and contented. A national spirit pervaded the country as never before. Civil and religious disturbances had, for the time, ceased. Commerce was sailing every sea. A spirit of knightly adventure was in the air. Men were coming more and more to realize the possibilities of life in this old world of ours. All classes vied with each other in enthusiastic devotion to the virgin queen. In this epoch of splendid energy it was but natural that the greatness of England should find some adequate expression; and it found that

expression in the magnificent poems and dramas which distinguish this the greatest creative period of her literature.

The chief distinction of this age is undoubtedly the wonderful development of the English drama. A consideration of that form of literature is foreign to the purposes of this volume; and we must therefore be satisfied to accord to it here merely the briefest mention. Omitting all reference to the growth of the drama in its earlier forms, and passing over a large group of minor dramatists who of themselves would have given distinction to any lesser age, we may select for notice CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564–1593), Shakespeare's greatest predecessor; the scholarly BEN JONSON (1573–1637), an intellectual giant in more ways than one; and, chief of all (1564–1616), the immortal Bard of Avon. The general verdict of his countrymen ranks SHAKESPEARE as incomparably the first of English poets. And not a few of other than Anglo-Saxon birth will subscribe to the words of Carlyle, who says in his *Heroes and Hero Worship*, "I think the best judgment, not of this country only but of Europe at large, is pointing to the conclusion that Shakespeare is the chief of all poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who in our recorded world has left a record of himself in literature." This, therefore, was a golden achievement of the Elizabethan age: that Shakespeare and Jonson and Marlowe and a score of others created a dramatic literature which the succeeding three hundred years failed to equal in any particular.

But if Shakespeare had never lived and the marvel of Elizabethan drama had never flashed upon the world, this period would still be memorable in the history of English poetry. The subject with which this age chiefly concerned itself in literary art, as in everyday life, was man under the stress of powerful emotion — of passion. The love sonnets and other lyrics of the age are unexcelled in their spontaneous vigor, beauty, and sincerity. Some one has said that England was at this time "a nest of singing birds." At no other time in her history and possibly in no other voice, save that of Burns, has the "singing note" rung so true and clear as from this throng of Elizabethan minor poets. But standing apart from these minor songsters on the one hand and from the dramatists on the other, was one who would have lent distinction to the age in which he lived even if, as was the case of Chaucer, he had been almost its only poet. This was the poet of pastoral and allegory, EDMUND SPENSER.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552–1599)

Edmund Spenser, "the poet and prophet of beauty," was born in London in 1552. Though without the humor of Chaucer, or the dra-

matic power and intensity of Shakespeare, or the sublimity of Milton, or the reflective insight of Wordsworth, Spenser nevertheless was the possessor of gifts which rank him honorably with these masters of English poetry. It is true that the qualities which distinguish his poetry are not such as tend to make him well known to the general reader of to-day; yet he has exerted an influence on writers and lovers of poetry sufficient to secure for him, above all others, the title of "the poet's poet." In the softness and melody of his verse, the luxurious richness and harmony of his colorings, the delicacy of his fanciful conceptions, his sensitiveness to beauty of every form, — in short, in the imaginative and sensuous, the purely "poetical," no Englishman has surpassed, and few have ever approached him.

1552–1580. — Of Spenser's early life little is known. His parents, though of good birth, were evidently poor, for we find the future poet at the age of seventeen enrolled at Pembroke College, Cambridge, as a sizar, or charity student. Having duly taken his master's degree at the age of twenty-four, he spent two years in the north of England, probably with relatives in Lancashire. On his return south in 1578, he was introduced by a college friend to the influential Earl of Leicester, and to Sir Philip Sidney, the nephew of the earl. By the next year he had written his *Shepheardes Calender*, an eclogue, or pastoral, in twelve books, one for each month of the year. Through the efforts of Leicester he received about this time an appointment as secretary to Lord Gray, the new Lord Deputy of Ireland; and thereafter that island, then lawless and turbulent, was destined to be the poet's home.

1580–1599. — Spenser continued to hold various official positions in his new home, and in 1588 secured for himself the grant of Kilcolman Castle and its estate, situated in County Cork. Here he was visited the next year by Sir Walter Raleigh, who found the poet in the midst of his great epic, the *Faerie Queene*, of which he had already written the first three books. Raleigh was so delighted with the poem that he persuaded its author to take it to London, where it was received with an equal delight. Spenser, as an unwilling suitor for the favor of the court, seems to have spent nearly two years in this visit to England; and during that time he published not only this earlier portion of the *Faerie Queene*, but also a volume of his minor poems. Having received a pension of fifty pounds, he returned to his Irish estate, where he was married in 1594. The next year he came again to London with three more books of his great poem, which he published together with his *Prothalamion* and other minor poems. Again returning to Ireland he was made sheriff of Cork — an office to which he had scarcely been appointed when a rebellion broke out, and his house was burned. He

was compelled to flee with his family for safety, first to Cork and then to London, where, broken in spirit and fortune, he died soon after his arrival, January, 1599. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, not far from the tomb of Chaucer.

Of Spenser's poems, both the *Prothalamion* and the *Epithalamion* are stately strains remarkable both for their thought and for the melody of their verse. But the *Faerie Queene* will always be most intimately associated with the poet's name, not only because it is his most considerable work, but also because it ranks with the most nobly conceived and executed of England's ideal poems. As Lowell says, it is "a land of pure heart's ease." Although Spenser completed little more than half his original design, the epic is still very long. We shall here give only a few lines from the first canto — lines which may serve to illustrate the style and character of the production, as well as to show the original "Spenserian stanza," a verse-form which Spenser invented and which bears his name.

STANZAS FROM

THE FIRST BOOKE OF THE FAERIE QUEENE

CONTAYNING

THE LEGENDE OF THE KNIGHT OF THE RED CROSSE. OR OF HOLINESSE

I

Lo ! I, the man whose Muse whylome did maske,
As time her taught, in lowly Shephards weeds,
Am now enforst, a farre unfitter taske,
For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine oaten reeds,
And sing of knights and ladies gentle deeds
Whose prayses having slept in silence long,
Me, all too meane, the sacred Muse areeds
To blazon broade emongst her learned throng :
Fierce warres and faithfull loves shall moralize my song.

II

Helpe then, O holy Virgin, chiefe of nyne,
Thy weaker novice to performe thy will ;
Lay forth out of thine everlasting scryne
The ántique rolles, which there lye hidden still,
Of Faerie knights, and fayrest Tanaquill,
Whom that most noble Briton Prince so long
Sought through the world, and suffered so much ill,
That I must rue his undeserved wrong :
O, helpe thou my weake wit, and sharpen my dull tong !

III

And thou, most dreaded impe of highest Jove,
Faire Venus sonne, that with thy cruell dart
At that good knight so cunningly didst rove,

That glorious fire it kindled in his hart ;
Lay now thy deadly heben bowe apart,
And with thy mother mylde come to mine ayde ;
Come, both ; and with you bring triumphant Mart,
In loves and gentle jollities arrayd,
After his murderous spoyles and bloudie rage allayd.

IV

And with them eke, O Goddesse heavenly bright,
Mirrour of grace, and majestie divine,
Great Ladie of the greatest Isle, whose light
Like Phoebus lampe throughout the world doth shine,
Shed thy faire beames into my feeble eyne,
And raise my thoughtes, too humble and too vile,
To thinke of that true glorious type of thine,
The argument of mine afflicted stile :
The which to heare vouchsafe, O dearest Dred, a while.

CANTO I

The patron of true Holinesse
Foule Errour doth defeate;
Hypocrisie, him to entrappe,
Doth to his home entreate.

I

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,
Ycladd in mightie armes and silver shielde,
Wherein old dints of deepe woundes did remaine,
The cruell markes of many a bloudy fielde ;
Yet armes till that time did he never wield :
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield :
Full jolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,
As one for knighty giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

II

And on his brest a bloudie crosse he bore,
The deare remembrance of his dying Lord,
For whose sweete sake that glorious badge he wore,
And dead, as living ever, him ador'd:
Upon his shield the like was also scor'd,
For soveraine hope, which in his helpe he had:
Right, faithfull, true he was in deede and word;
But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad;
Yet nothing did he dread, but ever was ydrad.

III

Upon a great adventure he was bond,
That greatest Gloriana to him gave,
That greatest glorious Queene of Faerie lond,
To winne him worshippe, and her grace to have,
Which of all earthly thinges, he most did crave;
And ever as he rode, his hart did earne,
To prove his puissance in battell brave
Upon his foe, and his new force to learne;
Upon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne.

IV

A lovely Ladie rode him faire beside,
Upon a lowly asse more white then snow;
Yet she much whiter; but the same did hide
Under a vele, that wimpled was full low;
And over all a blacke stole shee did throw:
As one that inly mournd, so was she sad,
And heavie sate upon her palfry slow;
Seemèd in heart some hidden care she had;
And by her in a line a milke-white lambe she lad.

V

So pure and innocent, as that same lambe,
She was in life and every vertuous lore;

And by descent from royall lynage came
Of ancient kinges and queenes, that had of yore
Their scepters stretcht from east to westerne shore,
And all the world in their subjection held;
Till that infernall feend with foule uprore
Forwasted all their land, and them expeld;
Whom to avenge she had this Knight from far compeld.

VI

Behind her farre away a Dwarfe did lag,
That lasie seemd, in being ever last,
Or wearièd with bearing of her bag
Of needments at his backe. Thus as they past,
The day with cloudes was suddeine overcast,
And angry Jove an hideous storme of raine
Did poure into his lemans lap so fast,
That everie wight to shrowd it did constrain;
And this faire couple eke to shroud themselves were fain.

VII

Enforst to seeke some covert nigh at hand,
A shadie grove not farr away they spide,
That promist ayde the tempest to withstand;
Whose loftie trees, yclad with sommers pride,
Did spred so broad, that heavens light did hide,
Not perceable with power of any starr:
And all within were pathes and alleies wide,
With footing worne, and leading inward farr:
Faire harbour that them seemes; so in they entred arre.

VIII

And foorth they passe, with pleasure forward led,
Joying to heare the birdes sweete harmony,
Which, therein shrouded from the tempest dred,
Seemd in their song to scorne the cruell sky.
Much can they praise the trees so straight and hy,

The sayling pine, the cedar proud and tall,
The vine-propp elme, the poplar never dry,
The builder oake, sole king of forrests all,
The aspine good for staves, the cypresse funerall,

IX

The laurell, meed of mightie conquerours
And poets sage, the firre that weepeth still,
The willow, worne of forlorne paramours,
The eugh, obedient to the benders will,
The birch for shaftes, the sallow for the mill,
The mirrhe sweete-bleeding in the bitter wound,
The warlike beech, the ash for nothing ill,
The fruitfull olive, and the platane round,
The carver holme, the maple seeldom inward sound.

X

Led with delight, they thus beguile the way,
Untill the blustring storme is overblowne;
When, weening to returne whence they did stray,
They cannot finde that path, which first was showne,
But wander too and fro in wayes unknowne,
Furthest from end then, when they neerest weene,
That makes them doubt their wits be not their owne:
So many pathes, so many turnings seene,
That which of them to take, in diverse doubt they been.

XI

At last resolving forward still to fare,
Till that some end they finde, or in or out,
That path they take, that beaten seemd most bare,
And like to lead the labyrinth about;
Which when by tract they hunted had throughout,
At length it brought them to a hollowe cave,
Amid the thickest woods. The Champion stout
Eftsoones dismounted from his courser brave,
And to the Dwarfe a while his needlesse spere he gave.

XII

"Be well aware," quoth then that Ladie milde,
"Least suddaine mischiefe ye too rash provoke:
The danger hid, the place unknowne and wilde,
Breedes dreadfull doubts: oft fire is without smoke,
And perill without show: therefore your stroke,
Sir Knight, withhold, till further tryall made."
"Ah Ladie," sayd he, "shame were to revoke
The forward footing for an hidden shade:
Vertue gives her selfe light through darknesse for to wade."

XIII

"Yea, but," quoth she, "the perill of this place
I better wot than you: though nowe too late
To wish you backe returne with foule disgrace,
Yet wisedome warnes, whilst foot is in the gate,
To stay the steppe, ere forcèd to retrate.
This is the wandring wood, this Errours den,
A monster vile, whom God and man does hate:
Therefore I read beware." "Fly, fly," quoth then
The fearful Dwarfe; "This is no place for living men."

XIV

But, full of fire and greedy hardiment,
The youthfull Knight could not for ought be staide;
But forth unto the darksom hole he went,
And lookèd in: his glistring armor made
A litle glooming light, much like a shade;
By which he saw the ugly monster plaine,
Halfe like a serpent horribly displaide,
But th' other halfe did womans shape retaine,
Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine.

[This "serpent" was the dragon Error, and with her the Knight now does battle. Having overcome Error and her serpent brood, the Knight and lady wander on, finally making their way out of the wood. They soon meet with "an aged sire, in long black weeds," with "feet all bare and beard all hoary gray," who leads them to his hermitage for shelter. But this seeming holy hermit is really an enchanter,

the personification of hypocrisy; and, by his black arts, he sends such dreams to the good Knight as make him doubt the worth of the lady whom he has been trying to aid.

Thus ends the first canto, of nearly sixty stanzas, or over five hundred lines. After eleven other cantos, similarly describing the wonderful adventures of the Knight and lady, the First Book ends with their betrothal,—a union of "Holiness" and "Truth." The succeeding five books tell the stories of similar services rendered to the "Faerie Queene."]

SONNET

To the Right Noble and Valorous Knight,

SIR WALTER RALEIGH,

Lord Wardein of the Stanneryes, and Lieftenaunt of Cornewaile

To thee that art the Sommers Nightingale,
Thy soveraigne Goddesses most deare delight,
Why doe I send this rusticke madrigale,
That may thy tunefull eare unseason quite?
Thou onely fit this argument to write,
In whose high thoughts Pleasure hath built her bowre,
And dainty Love learnd sweetly to endite.
My rimes I know unsavory and sowre,
To taste the streames, that, like a golden showre,
Flow from thy fruitfull head, of thy Loves praise;
Fitter perhaps to thunder martiall stowre,
When so thee list thy loftie Muse to raise:
Yet, till that thou thy poeme wilt make knowne,
Let thy faire Cinthias praises be thus rudely showne.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564–1616)

The glory of Shakespeare rests chiefly upon his achievements as dramatist, and an account of his life and works does not, therefore, come within the scope of this book. But to send forth a volume of representative English poems which does not include some production of the greatest poet of our tongue would be an anomaly. Since it would be impossible to print here one of Shakespeare's plays, it has seemed wise to let the poet speak through a few of the best of his sonnets. They were written probably between 1593 and 1603, most of them about 1594–1595.

FIVE SONNETS

XVIII

Shall I compare thee to a Sommers day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough windes do shake the darling buds of Maie,
And Sommers lease hath all too short a date:
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;
And every faire from faire sometime declines,
By chance, or natures changing course, untrim'd;
But thy eternall Sommer shall not fade,
Nor loose possession of that faire thou ow'st;
Nor shall Death brag thou wandr'st in his shade,
When in eternall lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

XXIX

When in disgrace with Fortune and mens eyes,
I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
And trouble deafe Heaven with my bootlesse cries,
And looke upon myselfe, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur'd like him, like him with friends possest,
Desiring this mans art, and that mans skope
With what I most injoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myselfe almost despising,

Haplye I thinke on thee,--and then my state
(Like to the larke at breake of daye arising
From sullen earth) sings himns at heavens gate;
For thy sweet love remembred, such welth brings,
That then I skorne to change my state with Kings.

XXX

When to the Sessions of sweet silent thought
I sommon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lacke of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes now waile my deare times waste:
Then can I drowne an eye unus'd to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weepe afresh loves long-since canceld woe,
And mone the expence of many a vannisht sight.
Then can I greeve at greevances foregon,
And heavily from woe to woe tell ore
The sad account of fore-bemonèd mone,
Which I new pay as if not payd before.
But if the while I thinke on thee, deare friend,
All losses are restord, and sorrowes end.

LXXIII

That time of yeeare thou maist in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, doe hange
Upon those boughes which shake against the could
Bare ruin'd quirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou seest the twilight of such day
As after Sunset fadeth in the West,—
Which by and by blacke night doth take away,
Deaths second selfe, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou seest the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lye,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nurrisht by.
This thou percev'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

CVI

When in the Chronicle of wasted time
I see discriptions of the fairest wights,
And beautie making beautifull old rime,
In praise of Ladies dead, and lovely Knights;
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauties best,
Of hand, of foote, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique Pen would have exprest
Even such a beauty as you maister now.
So all their praises are but prophesies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;
And, for they look'd but with devining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing:
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack toungs to praise.

CHAPTER V

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

1. THE PERIOD OF PURITAN INFLUENCE

By the "Elizabethan age" literary historians commonly understand not only the years which comprise the reign of Elizabeth, but also those of the first two Stuarts and even of the Commonwealth, that is, down to 1660. We are undoubtedly justified in conceiving the boundaries of the era as extending beyond the good queen's death, in 1603, for at that time much of Shakespeare's best work was as yet unaccomplished, while Ben Jonson, who must certainly be classed as an Elizabethan, had been writing only a very few years. But the later, or post-Elizabethan, literature soon showed signs of decadence; the spirit which had animated it was failing; and by the time that the young Milton had written his first lyrics the old order had well-nigh passed.

The age now beginning differed from its predecessor in many respects, but chiefly in that it was marked by a great civil and religious conflict. This is the period of the Puritan revolution. It was short and its limits cannot be precisely defined; but literary eras are independent of arbitrary or external bounds. Some Elizabethan poets, for instance, lived on and wrote up to the time of the Restoration; and the greatest of Puritans, Milton and Bunyan, produced their most characteristic work after their "period" had passed away and the excesses of the profligate Restoration had begun. There is no doubt, however, that from about 1625 to 1660, England, as a whole, was stirred by emotions and inspired by ideals far different from those which had held sway during the years of the Tudor Elizabeth. Characteristic tendencies — not to be confounded with those that followed or preceded — marked this period of Puritan influence.

In many ways the Puritan movement affected the life of the nation. "England," says Green, "became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." For fifty years the religious side of life had been gaining in prominence. Theological discussion was rife. Men were developing, spiritually and intellectually. Demands for larger freedom, civil and religious, grew more vehement year by year. These demands James I and his son Charles I ignored or scornfully refused to grant.

Charles went so far in his insistence upon his "divine right" to absolute power that in 1642 the great middle class of England found itself in arms against him. Since in the conflict that ensued the established church remained loyal to the king, the breach between churchman and Puritan was widened. The period was characterized by bitter religious and political controversy, by persecution, turbulence, and civil war. In 1649 Charles was overthrown, a Protectorate was soon established, and the triumph of Puritanism was complete.

This condition of affairs found expression in literature. Religious verse, theological discussions, fierce political treatises, now largely took the place of the rich, romantic poetry of the former age. The purely literary impulse was checked. With the outbreak of the Civil War the theatres were closed and "the splendid drama of the Elizabethans languished and died." Doubtless something of the Elizabethan spirit lingered; not a few lyrical strains were yet heard, less natural, perhaps, and less spontaneous than before, but still of a distinctive grace and beauty; not a few of the so-called metaphysical and religious poets of the newer school echoed the music of the sixteenth century; but, as a whole, the poetry of this period is characterized by insincerity, artificiality, and extravagance, and would rank very low in the esteem of posterity were it not for the splendid genius of JOHN MILTON.

JOHN MILTON (1608–1674)

Milton embodies in its most artistic literary form the spirit of Puritanism at its best. He is justly regarded not only as the poet, *par excellence*, of his time, but as one of the great poets of all time. In scholarly attainment, in critical insight, in his love of nature and truth, in his purity and earnestness of purpose, in his mastery of the grand style suitable to reflective and epic expression, he is the equal, if not the superior, of any other English poet. He is lacking in dramatic power and in humor, and hence, to a certain extent, in the human element. He is therefore not a Shakespeare. In narrative portrayal of actual life he is not even a Chaucer; yet he is fittingly regarded as the most excellent of English non-dramatic poets. His later poems, more than any others in the language, may be described by the adjective "sublime"; while his early lyrics have the grace, lightness, and exquisite fitness of phrase that mark the genius in verse, the artificer in words. Milton was, moreover, a man of broad public activity, and in this respect alone he would have left a deep impress upon the history of his time. So strong is his personality that through his works we know him almost as well as we know our contemporaries. His life falls easily into four very distinct divisions.

1608–1632. — Milton was born in London in December, 1608. His father was by occupation a scrivener, one whose business it is to draw up contracts and other legal documents; and was, moreover, a man of culture and of no little musical ability. The future poet's early education was received partly at St. Paul's school near his home, and partly under the guidance of most competent private tutors. At the age of sixteen he entered Christ's College, Cambridge; and for seven years he carried on his academic training with the earnest purpose which appeared in all his enterprises, taking in due order both bachelor's and master's degree. His poetic output during these college years was principally in Latin, the most important of his English verse being the *Hymn on the Nativity*, 1629; the *Lines on Shakespeare*, 1630; and the *Sonnet on arriving at the Age of Twenty-three*, December, 1631.

1632–1640. — Milton's father had meanwhile given up business and retired with comfortable means of subsistence to a country home in Horton, a small village about twenty miles from London. To this home, by the generous consent of his father, the young college graduate came, with the avowed purpose of supplementing his education with what he calls "a period of absolute leisure" — in reality a rigorous course in Greek and Latin literature, and a cultivation of the poetic talents with which he felt himself to be endowed. To us the residence at Horton is particularly memorable, since it was during these quiet years that Milton wrote the finest of his minor poems, among them *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. After nearly six years thus spent at Horton, the poet made a journey to Italy, where he passed about a year and a half in study and travel. Though he wrote little during this time, he had already begun to plan for some great work such as was realized in the epics of his old age. He was preparing to extend his travels into Greece, when rumors of approaching civil strife caused him in 1639 to return home. About this time, possibly as a means of self-support, he opened a boys' school in London.

1640–1660. — This period we may dismiss briefly, since Milton's poetic production during these years consists of but a few sonnets, some two hundred lines in all. Of sonnets he wrote altogether twenty-three: two in Cambridge, five during his journey in Italy (in Italian), and sixteen of varying degrees of excellence between 1642 and 1658. His literary work during these years consisted almost entirely of prose pamphlets on social and political questions of the day. Among the more notable of these were the *Areopagitica*, — a plea for the freedom of the press, — the *Tractate on Education*, the *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, and his *Defense for the English People*. Much of his work is violent and bitter in tone, and much, on the other hand, is sincerely and nobly eloquent. In 1643, at the age of thirty-five, he had married a certain Mary Powell

—a union which proved unhappy. In 1649 he was made Latin secretary to Cromwell, a position which he held for three years, when through overwork he became totally blind. However, he continued in his office until after the death of Cromwell in 1658, although his part in Commonwealth affairs during these later years was probably not an important one.

1660–1674. — On the Restoration, in 1660, Milton was first in hiding, and then for a time in custody; but, despite his connection with the politics of the Commonwealth, he was included in the general pardon issued by King Charles II. The blind poet, now fifty-two years of age, turned his back on the new world that came in with the Restoration, and calmly set himself to work toward the completion of an epic, the *Paradise Lost*. This was finished in 1665 and published two years later. *Paradise Lost*, "whose style," as Stopford Brooke remarks, "is the greatest in the whole range of English poetry," could not have been produced in the early Horton period, nor have been finished in the stormy years that followed. It is the suitable outgrowth of the period of calm upon which its writer had now entered. Following the *Paradise Lost*, in 1671, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes* were published. Three years later, in 1674, the poet died, "old and blind and fallen on evil days," yet "with his Titanic proportions and independent loneliness, the most impressive figure in English literature."

Great as are Milton's later poems, the admiration and the food of those who love strong poetic sustenance, they are not, as Mark Pattison puts it, poems which we should be likely to choose "for our favorite closet companions." The epics are too vast, too majestic, perhaps too difficult, to offer a very strong attraction to the general reader. The minor poems, however, the work of his earlier years, constitute a group which no one need neglect, nor can one afford to neglect them; and it is to four of these poems, together with a few of the sonnets, that we shall now direct our attention.

L'ALLEGRO

HENCE, loathèd Melancholy,
  Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born
In Stygian cave forlorn,
  'Mongst horrid shapes and shrieks and sights unholy!
Find out som uncouth cell,
  Wher brooding Darknes spreads his jealous wings,
And the night-raven sings;

There, under ebon shades and low-brow'd rocks,
As ragged as thy locks,
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But com, thou Goddess fair and free,
In Heav'n ycleap'd Euphrosynè,
And by men, heart-easing Mirth,
Whom lovely Venus, at a birth,
With two sister Graces more
To ivy-crownèd Bacchus bore:
Or whether (as som sager sing)
The frolick wind that breathes the spring,
Zephir, with Aurora playing,
As he met her once a Maying,
There, on beds of Violets blew
And fresh-blown roses washt in dew,
Fill'd her with thee, a daughter fair,
So bucksom, blith, and debonair.
Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jollity,
Quips and Cranks and wanton Wiles,
Nods and Becks and wreathèd Smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport that wrincled Care derides,
And Laughter holding both his sides.
Com, and trip it, as ye go,
On the light fantastick toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty;
And, if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crue,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprovèd pleasures free;
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull Night,
From his watch-towre in the skies,
Till the dappled Dawn doth rise;
Then to com, in spight of sorrow,

And at my window bid good morrow,
Through the sweetbriar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of Darknes thin,
And to the stack, or the barn-dore,
Stoutly struts his dames before;
Oft list'ning how the hounds and horn
Chearly rouse the slumbring Morn,
From the side of som hoar hill,
Through the high wood echoing shrill;
Som time walking, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate
Wher the great Sun begins his state,
Rob'd in flames and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight;
While the plowman, neer at hand,
Whistles o're the furrow'd land,
And the milkmaid singeth blithe,
And the mower whets his sithe,
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Streit mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
Whilst the lantskip round it measures,
Russet lawns, and fallows gray,
Where the nibling flocks do stray;
Mountains, on whose barren brest
The labouring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim with daisies pide;
Shallow brooks and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees
Boosom'd high in tufted trees,
Wher perhaps som beauty lies,
The cynosure of neighbouring eyes.
Hard by, a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two agèd okes,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis met

Are at their savory dinner set
Of hearbs and other country messes,
Which the neat-handed Phillis dresses;
And then in haste her bowre she leaves,
With Thestylis to bind the sheaves;
Or, if the earlier season lead,
To the tann'd haycock in the mead.
Som times, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round,
And the jocond rebecks sound
To many a youth and many a maid
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;
And young and old com forth to play
On a sunshine holyday,
Till the livelong daylight fail:
Then to the spicy nut-brown ale,
With stories told of many a feat,
How fairy Mab the junkets eat.
She was pincht and pull'd, she sed;
And he, by friar's lanthorn led,
Tells how the drudging goblin swet
To ern his cream-bowle duly set,
When in one night, ere glimps of morn,
His shadowy flale hath thresh'd the corn
That ten day-labourers could not end;
Then lies him down, the lubbar fend,
And, stretch'd out all the chimney's length,
Basks at the fire his hairy strength,
And crop-full out of dores he flings,
Ere the first cock his mattin rings.
Thus don the tales, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.
Towrèd cities please us then,
And the busie humm of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of Peace, high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eies

Rain influence, and judge the prise
Of wit or arms, while both contend
To win her grace whom all commend.
There let Hymen oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And Pomp, and Feast, and Revelry,
With Mask and antique Pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eeves by haunted stream.
Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learnèd sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespear, Fancie's childe,
Warble his native wood-notes wilde.
And ever, against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian aires,
Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce,
In notes with many a winding bout
Of linckèd sweetnes long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice thro' mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that ty
The hidden soul of harmony;
That Orpheus' self may heave his head
From golden slumber on a bed
Of heapt Elysian flowres, and hear
Such streins as would have won the ear
Of Pluto to have quite set free
His half-regain'd Eurydicè.
These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.

IL PENSEROSO

Hence, vain deluding Joyes,
The brood of Folly without father bred!
How little you bested,
Or fill the fixèd mind with all your toyes!

Dwell in som idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun beams,
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.
But, hail! thou Goddess sage and holy!
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore, to our weaker view,
O'relaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue;
Black, but such as in esteem
Prince Memnon's sister might beseem,
Or that starr'd Ethiope queen that strove
To set her beautie's praise above
The Sea Nymphs, and their powers offended.
Yet thou art higher far descended;
Thee bright-haired Vesta long of yore
To solitary Saturn bore;
His daughter she (in Saturn's raign
Such mixture was not held a stain).
Oft in glimmering bowres and glades
He met her, and in secret shades
Of woody Ida's inmost grove,
While yet there was no fear of Jove.
Com, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, stedfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestick train,
And sable stole of Cipres lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Com; but keep thy wonted state,
With eev'n step, and musing gate,
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes:
There, held in holy passion still,
Forget thy self to marble, till

With a sad leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast.
And joyn with thee calm Peace and Quiet,
Spare Fast, that oft with gods doth diet,
And hears the Muses in a ring
Ay round about Jove's altar sing;
And adde to these retirèd Leasure,
That in trim gardens takes his pleasure;
But, first and chiefest, with thee bring
Him that yon soars on golden wing,
Guiding the fiery-wheelèd throne,
The cherub Contemplatiön;
And the mute Silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song,
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of Night,
While Cynthia checks her dragon yoke
Gently o're th' accustom'd oke.
Sweet bird, that shunn'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft the woods among
I woo to hear thy even-song;
And, missing thee, I walk unseen
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wandring moon,
Riding neer her highest noon,
Like one that had bin led astray
Through the Heav'n's wide pathles way,
And oft, as if her head she bow'd,
Stooping through a fleecy cloud.
Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfeu sound,
Over som wide-water'd shoar,
Swinging slow with sullen roar;
Or, if the ayr will not permit,
Som still removèd place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach Light to counterfeit a gloom,

Far from all resort of mirth,
Save the cricket on the hearth,
Or the belman's drousie charm
To bless the dores from nightly harm.
Or let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely towr,
Where I may oft out-watch the Bear,
With thrice great Hermes, or unsphear
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
And of those dæmons that are found
In fire, air, flood, or under ground,
Whose power hath a true consent
With planet or with element.
Som time let gorgeous Tragedy
In scepter'd pall com sweeping by,
Presenting Thebs, or Pelops' line,
Or the tale of Troy divine,
Or what (though rare) of later age
Ennobled hath the buskind stage.
But, O sad Virgin! that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower,
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made Hell grant what Love did seek;
Or call up him that left half told
The story of Cambúscan bold,
Of Camball, and of Algarsife,
And who had Canacè to wife,
That own'd the vertuous ring and glass,
And of the wondrous hors of brass,
On which the Tartar king did ride;
And if ought els great bards beside
In sage and solemn tunes have sung,
Of turneys and of trophies hung,

Of forests, and inchantments drear,
Where more is meant than meets the ear.
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil-suited Morn appeer,
Not trickt and frounc't, as she was wont
With the Attick boy to hunt,
But cherchef't in a comely cloud,
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or usher'd with a shower still,
When the gust hath blown his fill,
Ending on the russling leaves,
With minute drops from off the eaves.
And, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, Goddess, bring
To archèd walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine, or monumental oake,
Where the rude ax with heavèd stroke
Was never heard the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.
There, in close covert, by som brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from Day's garish eie,
While the bee with honied thie,
That at her flowry work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such consort as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feather'd Sleep;
And let som strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portrature display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid;
And, as I wake, sweet musick breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by som Spirit to mortals good,
Or th' unseen Genius of the wood.
But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloyster's pale,

And love the high embowèd roof,
With antick pillars massy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dimm religious light.
There let the pealing organ blow
To the full voic'd quire below,
In service high and anthems cleer,
As may with sweetnes, through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peacefull hermitage,
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that Heav'n doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew ;
Till old Experience do attain
To somthing like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live.

LYCIDAS

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and by occasion foretells the ruine of our corrupted Clergie, then in their height.

Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more,
Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never sear,
I com to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with forc'd fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due ;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.
Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.

He must not flote upon his watry bear
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind,
Without the meed of som melodious tear.
Begin, then, Sisters of the Sacred Well,
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
Begin, and somwhat loudly sweep the string.
Hence with denial vain and coy excuse:
So may som gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destin'd urn,
And, as he passes, turn,
And bid fair peace be to my sable shrowd!
For we were nurst upon the self-same hill,
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill;
Together both, ere the high lawns appear'd
Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
We drove a field, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds her sultry horn,
Batt'ning our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
Oft till the star that rose at ev'ning bright
Towards Heav'n's descent had slop'd his westering wheel.
Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
Temper'd to the oaten flute,
Rough Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with clov'n heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long;
And old Damætas lov'd to hear our song.
But, O the heavy change, now thou art gon,
Now thou art gon, and never must return!
Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
With wilde thyme and the gadding vine o'regrown,
And all their echoes mourn.
The willows, and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft layes.
As killing as the canker to the rose,
Or taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrop wear
When first the white thorn blows;
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Clos'd o're the head of your lov'd Lycidas?
For neither were ye playing on the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, ly,
Nor on the shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where Deva spreads her wisard stream.
Ay me! I fondly dream
"Had ye bin there". . . for what could that have don?
What could the Muse her self that Orpheus bore,
The Muse her self, for her inchanting son,
Whom universal Nature did lament,
When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
His goary visage down the stream was sent,
Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?
Alas! what boots it with uncessant care
To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,
And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
Were it not better don, as others use,
To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
Fame is the spur that the clear spirit doth raise
(That last infirmity of noble mind)
To scorn delights and live laborious dayes;
But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorrèd shears,
And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
Phœbus repli'd, and touch'd my trembling ears:
"Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
Nor in the glistering foil
Set off to th' world, nor in broad Rumour lies,
But lives and spreds aloft by those pure eyes
And perfet witnes of all-judging Jove;
As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
Of so much fame in Heav'n expect thy meed."
O fountain Arethuse, and thou honour'd flood,
Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds,
That strain I heard was of a higher mood:

But now my oat proceeds,
And listens to the Herald of the Sea,
That came in Neptune's plea.
He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the fellon winds,
What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
And question'd every gust of rugged wings
That blows from off each beakèd promontory:
They knew not of his story;
And sage Hippotadès their answer brings,
That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd:
The air was calm, and on the level brine
Sleek Panopè with all her sisters play'd.
It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
Built in th' eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.
Next, Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.
"Ah! who hath reft," quoth he, "my dearest pledge?"
Last came, and last did go,
The pilot of the Galilean lake;
Two massy keyes he bore of metals twain
(The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).
He shook his miter'd locks, and stern bespake: —
"How well could I have spar'd for thee, young Swain,
Anow of such, as for their bellies' sake,
Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!
Of other care they little reck'ning make
Then how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
Blind mouthes! that scarce themselves know how to hold
A sheep-hook, or have learn'd ought els the least
That to the faithfull herdsman's art belongs!
What recks it them? What need they? they are sped;
And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,

But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread;
Besides what the grim woolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed;
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."
  Return, Alphéus; the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bels and flourets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the milde whispers use
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enameld eyes,
That on the green terf suck the honied showres,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowres.
Bring the rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale gessamine,
The white pink, and the pansie freakt with jeat,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attir'd woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid Amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureat herse where Lycid lies.
For so, to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,
Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurl'd;
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous world;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows deny'd,
Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold:
Look homeward, angel, now, and melt with ruth;
And, O ye Dolphins, waft the haples youth.

Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watry floar:
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of Him that walk'd the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of Joy and Love.
There entertain him all the Saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears for ever from his eyes.
Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth swain to th' okes and rills,
While the still Morn went out with sandals grey;
He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,
With eager thought warbling his Dorick lay:
And now the sun had stretch'd out all the hills,
And now was dropt into the western bay.
At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blew:
To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

COMUS

A MASK PRESENTED AT LUDLOW CASTLE, 1634, BEFORE JOHN, EARL OF BRIDGEWATER, THEN PRESIDENT OF WALES

THE PERSONS

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, afterwards in the habit of THYRSIS.
COMUS, with his Crew.
THE LADY.
FIRST BROTHER.
SECOND BROTHER.
SABRINA, the Nymph.

The chief persons which presented were,—

THE LORD BRACLY;
MR. THOMAS EGERTON, his brother;
THE LADY ALICE EGERTON.

The first Scene discovers a wilde wood.

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT *descends or enters.*

Spirit. BEFORE the starry threshold of Jove's court
My mansion is, where those immortal shapes
Of bright aëreal spirits live insphear'd
In regions milde of calm and sérene air,
Above the smoak and stirr of this dim spot
Which men call Earth, and, with low-thoughted care,
Confin'd and pester'd in this pinfold here,
Strive to keep up a frail and feaverish being,
Unmindfull of the crown that Vertue gives,
After this mortal change, to her true servants
Amongst the enthron'd gods on sainted seats.
Yet som there be that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that golden key
That opes the palace of eternity.
To such my errand is; and, but for such,
I would not soil these pure ambrosial weeds
With the rank vapours of this sin-worn mould.

But to my task. Neptune, besides the sway
Of every salt flood and each ebbing stream,
Took in by lot, 'twixt high and neather Jove,
Imperial rule of all the sea-girt iles
That, like to rich and various gemms, inlay
The unadornèd boosom of the deep;
Which he, to grace his tributary gods,
By course commits to several government,
And gives them leave to wear their saphire crowns
And wield their little tridents. But this Ile,
The greatest and the best of all the main,
He quarters to his blu-hair'd deities;
And all this tract that fronts the falling sun
A noble Peer of mickle trust and power
Has in his charge, with temper'd awe to guide
An old and haughty nation, proud in arms:
Where his fair off-spring, nurs't in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state,
And new-entrusted scepter. But their way
Lies through the perplex't paths of this drear wood,
The nodding horror of whose shady brows
Threats the forlorn and wandring passinger;
And here their tender age might suffer peril,
But that, by quick command from soveran Jove,
I was despatcht for their defence and guard!
And listen why; for I will tell you now
What never yet was heard in tale or song,
From old or modern bard, in hall or bowr.
Bacchus, that first from out the purple grape
Crush't the sweet poison of mis-usèd wine,
After the Tuscan mariners transform'd,
Coasting the Tyrrhene shore, as the winds listed,
On Circe's iland fell. (Who knows not Circe,
The daughter of the Sun, whose charmèd cup
Whoever tasted lost his upright shape,
And downward fell into a groveling swine?)
This Nymph, that gaz'd upon his clustring locks,
With ivy berries wreath'd, and his blithe youth,

Had by him, ere he parted thence, a son
Much like his father, but his mother more,
Whom therefore she brought up, and Comus nam'd:
Who, ripe and frolick of his full-grown age,
Roving the Celtick and Iberian fields,
At last betakes him to this ominous wood,
And, in thick shelter of black shades imbower'd,
Excells his mother at her mighty art;
Offring to every weary traveller
His orient liquor in a crystal glass,
To quench the drouth of Phœbus; which as they taste
(For most do taste through fond intemperate thirst),
Soon as the potion works, their human count'nance,
Th' express resemblance of the gods, is chang'd
Into som brutish form of woolf or bear,
Or ounce or tiger, hog, or bearded goat,
All other parts remaining as they were.
And they, so perfect is their misery,
Not once perceive their foul disfigurement,
But boast themselves more comely than before,
And all their friends and native home forget,
To roule with pleasure in a sensual stie.
Therefore, when any favor'd of high Jove
Chances to pass through this adventrous glade,
Swift as the sparkle of a glancing star
I shoot from heav'n, to give him safe convoy,
As now I do. But first I must put off
These my skie robes, spun out of Iris' wooff,
And take the weeds and likenes of a swain
That to the service of this house belongs,
Who, with his soft pipe and smooth-dittied song,
Well knows to still the wilde winds when they roar,
And hush the waving woods; nor of less faith,
And in this office of his mountain watch
Likeliest, and nearest to the present ayd
Of this occasion. But I hear the tread
Of hatefull steps; I must be viewles now.

COMUS *enters, with a charming-rod in one hand, his glass in the other; with him a rout of monsters, headed like sundry sorts of wilde beasts, but otherwise like men and women, their apparel glistering. They come in making a riotous and unruly noise, with torches in their hands.*

Comus. The star that bids the shepherd fold
Now the top of heav'n doth hold;
And the gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantick stream:
And the slope sun his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing toward the other gole
Of his chamber in the east.
Meanwhile, welcom joy and feast,
Midnight shout and revelry,
Tipsie dance and jollity.
Braid your locks with rosie twine,
Dropping odors, dropping wine.
Rigor now is gon to bed;
And Advice with scrupulous head,
Strict Age, and sowre Severity,
With their grave saws, in slumber lie.
We, that are of purer fire,
Imitate the starry quire,
Who, in their nightly watchfull sphears,
Lead in swift round the months and years.
The sounds and seas, with all their finny drove,
Now to the moon in wavering morrice move;
And on the tawny sands and shelves
Trip the pert fairies and the dapper elves.
By dimpled brook and fountain-brim,
The wood-nymphs, deckt with daisies trim,
Their merry wakes and pastimes keep:
What hath night to do with sleep?
Night hath better sweets to prove;
Venus now wakes, and wak'ns Love.

Com, let us our rights begin;
'Tis onely day-light that makes sin,
Which these dun shades will ne're report.
Hail, goddess of nocturnal sport,
Dark-vailed Cotytto, t' whom the secret flame
Of mid-night torches burns! mysterious dame,
That ne're art call'd but when the dragon woom
Of Stygian darkness spets her thickest gloom,
And makes one blot of all the air!
Stay thy cloudy ebon chair,
Wherein thou rid'st with Hecat', and befriend
Us thy vow'd priests, till utmost end
Of all thy dues be done, and none left out;
Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn on the Indian steep,
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep,
And to the tell-tale Sun discry
Our conceal'd solemnity.
Com, knit hands, and beat the ground
In a light fantastick round.

The Measure

Break off, break off! I feel the different pace
Of som chast footing near about this ground.
Run to your shrouds within these brakes and trees;
Our number may affright. Some virgin sure
(For so I can distinguish by mine art)
Benighted in these woods! Now to my charms,
And to my wily trains: I shall ere long
Be well stock't with as fair a herd as graz'd
About my mother Circe. Thus I hurl
My dazling spells into the spungy ayr,
Of power to cheat the eye with blear illusion,
And give it false presentments, lest the place
And my quaint habits breed astonishment,
And put the damsel to suspicious flight;
Which must not be, for that's against my course.

I, under fair pretence of friendly ends,
And well-plac't words of glozing courtesie,
Baited with reasons not unplausible,
Wind me into the easie-hearted man,
And hug him into snares. When once her eye
Hath met the vertue of this magick dust
I shall appear som harmles villager,
Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
But here she comes; I fairly step aside,
And hearken, if I may her busines hear.

The LADY *enters.*

Lady. This way the noise was, if mine ear be true,
My best guide now. Methought it was the sound
Of riot and ill-manag'd merriment,
Such as the jocund flute or gamesom pipe
Stirs up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss. I should be loath
To meet the rudeness and swill'd insolence
Of such late wassailers; yet, oh! where els
Shall I inform my unacquainted feet
In the blind mazes of this tangl'd wood?
My brothers, when they saw me wearied out
With this long way, resolving here to lodge
Under the spreading favour of these pines,
Stepped, as they se'd, to the next thicket-side
To bring me berries, or such cooling fruit
As the kind hospitable woods provide.
They left me then when the gray-hooded Eev'n,
Like a sad votarist in palmer's weed,
Rose from the hindmost wheels of Phœbus' wain.
But where they are, and why they came not back,
Is now the labour of my thoughts. 'Tis likeliest
They had ingag'd their wandring steps too far;

And envious darknes, ere they could return,
Had stole them from me. Els, O theevish Night,
Why shouldst thou, but for som fellonious end,
In thy dark lantern thus close up the stars
That Nature hung in heav'n, and fill'd their lamps
With everlasting oil, to give due light
To the misled and lonely traveller?
This is the place, as well as I may guess,
Whence eev'n now the tumult of loud mirth
Was rife, and perfet in my list'ning ear;
Yet nought but single darknes do I find.
What might this be? A thousand fantasies
Begin to throng into my memory,
Of calling shapes, and beckning shadows dire,
And airy tongues that syllable men's names
On sands and shoars and desert wildernesses.
These thoughts may startle well, but not astound
The vertuous mind, that ever walks attended
By a strong siding champion, Conscïence.
O, welcom, pure-ey'd Faith, white-handed Hope,
Thou hovering angel girt with golden wings,
And thou unblemish't form of Chastity!
I see ye visibly, and now believe
That He, the Supreme Good, t' whom all things ill
Are but as slavish officers of vengeance,
Would send a glistring guardian, if need were,
To keep my life and honour unassail'd. . . .
Was I deceiv'd, or did a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night?
I did not err: there does a sable cloud
Turn forth her silver lining on the night,
And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.
I cannot hallow to my brothers, but
Such noise as I can make to be heard farthest
Ile venter; for my new-enliv'n'd spirits
Prompt me, and they perhaps are not far off.

Song

Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that liv'st unseen
Within thy airy shell
By slow Meander's margent green,
And in the violet-imbroider'd vale
Where the love-lorn nightingale
Nightly to thee her sad song mourneth well:
Canst thou not tell me of a gentle pair
That likest thy Narcissus are?
O, if thou have
Hid them in som flowry cave,
Tell me but where,
Sweet Queen of Parly, Daughter of the Sphear!
So mai'st thou be translated to the skies,
And give resounding grace to all Heav'n's harmonies!

Comus. Can any mortal mixture of earth's mould
Breath such divine inchanting ravishment?
Sure something holy lodges in that brest,
And with these raptures moves the vocal air
To testifie his hidd'n residence.
How sweetly did they float upon the wings
Of silence, through the empty-vaulted night,
At every fall smoothing the raven doune
Of darknes till it smil'd! I have oft heard
My mother Circe with the Sirens three,
Amidst the flowery-kirtl'd Naiades,
Culling their potent hearbs and balefull drugs,
Who, as they sung, would take the prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium: Scylla wept,
And chid her barking waves into attention,
And fell Charybdis murmur'd soft applause.
Yet they in pleasing slumber lull'd the sense,
And in sweet madnes rob'd it of it self;
But such a sacred and home-felt delight,
Such sober certainty of waking bliss,
I never heard till now. Ile speak to her,

And she shall be my queen. — Hail, forren wonder!
Whom certain these rough shades did never breed,
Unless the goddess that in rural shrine
Dwell'st here with Pan or Silvan, by blest song
Forbidding every bleak unkindly fog
To touch the prosperous growth of this tall wood.
Lady. Nay, gentle shepherd, ill is lost that praise
That is addres't to unattending ears.
Not any boast of skill, but extreme shift
How to regain my sever'd company,
Compell'd me to awake the courteous Echo
To give me answer from her mossie couch.
Comus. What chance, good Lady, hath bereft you thus?
Lady. Dim darknes and this leavie labyrinth.
Comus. Could that divide you from neer-ushering guides?
Lady. They left me weary on a grassie terf.
Comus. By falshood, or discourtesie, or why?
Lady. To seek i' th' vally som cool friendly spring.
Comus. And left your fair side all unguarded, Lady?
Lady. They were but twain, and purpos'd quick return.
Comus. Perhaps fore-stalling night prevented them.
Lady. How easie my misfortune is to hit!
Comus. Imports their loss, beside the present need?
Lady. No less than if I should my brothers loose.
Comus. Were they of manly prime, or youthful bloom?
Lady. As smooth as Hebe's their unrazor'd lips.
Comus. Two such I saw, what time the labour'd oxe
In his loose traces from the furrow came,
And the swink't hedger at his supper sate.
I saw them under a green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,
Plucking ripe clusters from the tender shoots;
Their port was more than human, as they stood.
I took it for a faery visiön
Of som gay creatures of the element,
That in the colours of the rainbow live,
And play i' th' plighted clouds. I was aw-strook,
And, as I past I worshipt. If those you seek,

It were a journey like the path to Heav'n
To help you find them.
Lady. Gentle villager,
What readiest way would bring me to that place?
Comus. Due west it rises from this shrubby point.
Lady. To find out that, good shepherd, I suppose,
In such a scant allowance of star-light,
Would overtask the best land-pilot's art,
Without the sure guess of well-practis'd feet.
Comus. I know each lane, and every alley green,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of this wilde wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side,
My daily walks and ancient neighborhood;
And, if your stray attendance be yet lodg'd
Or shroud within these limits, I shall know
Ere morrow wake, or the low-roosted lark
From her thatch't pallat rowse. If otherwise,
I can conduct you, Lady, to a low
But loyal cottage, where you may be safe
Till further quest.
Lady. Shepherd, I take thy word,
And trust thy honest-offer'd courtesie,
Which oft is sooner found in lowly sheds,
With smoaky rafters, than in tapstry halls
And courts of princes, where it first was nam'd,
And yet is most pretended. In a place
Less warranted than this, or less secure,
I cannot be, that I should fear to change it.
Eie me, blest Providence, and square my triall
To my proportion'd strength! Shepherd, lead on. . . .

The Two Brothers

Eld. Bro. Unmuffle, ye faint stars; and thou, fair moon,
That wont'st to love the traveller's benizon,
Stoop thy pale visage through an amber cloud,
And disinherit Chaos, that raigns here
In double night of darknes and of shades;

Or, if your influence be quite damm'd up
With black usurping mists, som gentle taper,
Though a rush-candle from the wicker hole
Of som clay habitation, visit us
With thy long levell'd rule of streaming light,
And thou shalt be our star of Arcady,
Or Tyrian Cynosure.
Sec. Bro. Or, if our eyes
Be barr'd that happines, might we but hear
The folded flocks, pen'd in their watled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops,
Or whistle from the lodge, or village cock
Count the night-watches to his feathery dames,
'Twould be som solace yet, som little chearing,
In this close dungeon of innumerous bowes.
But, Oh, that haples virgin, our lost sister!
Where may she wander now, whither betake her
From the chill dew, amongst rude burrs and thistles?
Perhaps som cold bank is her boulster now,
Or 'gainst the rugged bark of som broad elm
Leans her unpillow'd head, fraught with sad fears.
What if in wild amazement and affright,
Or, while we speak, within the direful grasp
Of savage hunger, or of savage heat!
Eld. Bro. Peace, brother: be not over-exquisite
To cast the fashion of uncertain evils;
For, grant they be so, while they rest unknown,
What need a man forestall his date of grief,
And run to meet what he would most avoid?
Or, if they be but false alarms of fear,
How bitter is such self-delusiön!
I do not think my sister so to seek,
Or so unprincipl'd in vertue's book,
And the sweet peace that goodnes boosoms ever,
As that the single want of light and noise
(Not being in danger, as I trust she is not)
Could stir the constant mood of her calm thoughts,
And put them into mis-becoming plight.

Vertue could see to do what Vertue would
By her own radiant light, though sun and moon
Were in the flat sea sunk. And Wisdom's self
Oft seeks to sweet retirèd solitude,
Where, with her best nurse, Contemplatiön,
She plumes her feathers, and lets grow her wings,
That, in the various bussle of resort,
Were all to ruffl'd, and somtimes impair'd.
He that has light within his own cleer brest
May sit i' th' center, and enjoy bright day:
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts
Benighted walks under the mid-day sun;
Himself is his own dungeon.
Sec. Bro. 'Tis most true
That musing Meditation most affects
The pensive secrecy of desert cell,
Far from the cheerfull haunt of men and herds,
And sits as safe as in a senat-house;
For who would rob a hermit of his weeds,
His few books, or his beads, or maple dish,
Or do his gray hairs any violence?
But Beauty, like the fair Hesperian tree
Laden with blooming gold, had need the guard
Of dragon-watch with uninchanted eye
To save her blossoms, and defend her fruit,
From the rash hand of bold Incontinence.
You may as well spread out the unsun'd heaps
Of miser's treasure by an out-law's den,
And tell me it is safe, as bid me hope
Danger will wink on Opportunity,
And let a single helpless maiden pass
Uninjur'd in this wilde surrounding waste.
Of night or loneliness it recks me not;
I fear the dred events that dog them both,
Lest som ill-greeting touch attempt the person
Of our unownèd sister.
Eld. Bro. I do not, brother,
Inferr as if I thought my sister's state

Secure without all doubt or controversie;
Yet, where an equal poise of hope and fear
Does arbitrate th' event, my nature is
That I encline to hope rather than fear,
And gladly banish squint suspiciön.
My sister is not so defenceless left
As you imagine; she has a hidden strength,
Which you remember not.
Sec. Bro. What hidden strength,
Unless the strength of Heav'n, if you mean that?
Eld. Bro. I mean that too, but yet a hidden strength,
Which, if Heav'n gave it, may be term'd her own.
'Tis chastity, my brother, chastity:
She that has that is clad in compleat steel,
And, like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen,
May trace huge forrests, and unharbour'd heaths,
Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wildes;
Where, through the sacred rayes of chastity,
No savage fierce, bandite, or mountaneer,
Will dare to soyl her virgin purity.
Yea, there where very desolation dwels,
By grots and caverns shag'd with horrid shades,
She may pass on with unblench't majesty,
Be it not don in pride, or in presumption.
Som say no evil thing that walks by night,
In fog or fire, by lake or moorish fen,
Blew meager hag, or stubborn unlaid ghost,
That breaks his magick chains at curfeu time,
No goblin or swart faëry of the mine,
Hath hurtfull power o're true virginity.
Do ye believe me yet, or shall I call
Antiquity from the old schools of Greece
To testifie the arms of chastity?
Hence had the huntress Dian her dred bow,
Fair silver-shafted queen forever chaste,
Wherewith she tam'd the brinded lioness
And spotted mountain-pard, but set at nought
The frivolous bolt of Cupid; gods and men

Fear'd her stern frown, and she was queen o' th' woods.
What was that snaky-headed Gorgon shield
That wise Minerva wore, unconquer'd virgin,
Wherewith she freez'd her foes to congeal'd stone,
But rigid looks of chast austerity,
And noble grace that dash't brute violence
With sudden adoration and blank aw?
So dear to Heav'n is saintly chastity
That, when a soul is found sincerely so,
A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
And in cleer dream and solemn visiön
Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
Till oft convérs with heav'nly habitants
Begin to cast a beam on th' outward shape,
The unpolluted temple of the mind,
And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
Till all be made immortal. But, when lust,
By unchaste looks, loose gestures, and foul talk,
But most by leud and lavish act of sin,
Lets in defilement to the inward parts,
The soul grows clotted by contagiön,
Imbodies, and imbrutes, till she quite loose
The divine property of her first being.
Such are those thick and gloomy shadows damp
Oft seen in charnel-vaults and sepulchers,
Lingering and sitting by a new-made grave,
As loath to leave the body that it lov'd,
And link't itself by carnal sensualty
To a degenerate and degraded state.
Sec. Bro. How charming is divine Philosophy!
Not harsh and crabbèd, as dull fools suppose,
But musical as is Apollo's lute,
And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweets,
Where no crude surfet raigns.
Eld. Bro. List! list! I hear
Som far-off hallow break the silent air.
Sec. Bro. Methought so too; what should it be?

Eld. Bro. For certain,
Either som one, like us, night-founder'd here,
Or els som neighbour wood-man, or, at worst,
Some roaving robber calling to his fellows.
Sec. Bro. Heav'n keep my sister! Agen, agen, and neer!
Best draw, and stand upon our guard.
Eld. Bro. Ile hallow:
If he be friendly, he comes well: if not,
Defence is a good cause, and Heav'n be for us!

The ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *habited like a shepherd*

That hallow I should know. What are you? speak.
Com not too neer; you fall on iron stakes els.
Spir. What voice is that? my young lord? speak agen.
Sec. Bro. O brother, 'tis my father's Shepherd, sure.
Eld. Bro. Thyrsis! whose artful strains have oft delaid
The hudling brook to hear his madrigal,
And sweeten'd every musk-rose of the dale.
How cam'st thou here, good swain? Hath any ram
Slipt from the fold, or young kid lost his dam,
Or straggling weather the pen't flock forsook?
How could'st thou find this dark sequester'd nook?
Spir. O my lov'd master's heir, and his next joy,
I came not here on such a trivial toy
As a stray'd ewe, or to pursue the stealth
Of pilfering woolf; not all the fleecy wealth
That doth enrich these downs is worth a thought
To this my errand, and the care it brought.
But, oh! my virgin Lady, where is she?
How chance she is not in your company?
Eld. Bro. To tell thee sadly, Shepherd, without blame
Or our neglect, we lost her as we came.
Spir. Ay me unhappy! then my fears are true.
Eld. Bro. What fears, good Thyrsis? Prethee briefly shew.
Spir. Ile tell ye. Tis' not vain or fabulous
(Though so esteem'd by shallow ignorance)
What the sage poets, taught by th' heav'nly Muse,

Storied of old in high immortal vers
Of dire Chimeras and inchanted iles,
And rifted rocks whose entrance leads to Hell;
For such there be, but unbelief is blind.
Within the navil of this hideous wood,
Immur'd in cypress shades, a sorcerer dwels,
Of Bacchus and of Circe born, great Comus,
Deep skill'd in all his mother's witcheries,
And here to every thirsty wanderer
By sly enticement gives his baneful cup,
With many murmurs mixt, whose pleasing poison
The visage quite transforms of him that drinks,
And the inglorious likenes of a beast
Fixes instead, unmoulding reason's mintage
Character'd in the face. This have I learn't
Tending my flocks hard by i' th' hilly crofts
That brow this bottom glade; whence night by night
He and his monstrous rout are heard to howl
Like stabl'd wolves, or tigers at their prey,
Doing abhorrèd rites to Hecatè
In their obscurèd haunts of inmost bowres.
Yet have they many baits and guileful spells
To inveigle and invite th' unwary sense
Of them that pass unweeting by the way.
This evening late, by then the chewing flocks
Had ta'n their supper on the savoury herb
Of knot-grass dew-besprent, and were in fold,
I sat me down to watch upon a bank
With ivy canopied, and interwove
With flaunting hony-suckle, and began,
Wrapt in a pleasing fit of melancholy,
To meditate my rural minstrelsie,
Till fancy had her fill. But ere a close
The wonted roar was up amidst the woods,
And fill'd the ayr with barbarous dissonance;
At which I ceas't, and listen'd them a while,
Till an unusual stop of sudden silence
Gave respit to the drowsie frighted steeds

That draw the litter of close-curtain'd Sleep.
At last a soft and solemn-breathing sound
Rose like a steam of rich distill'd perfumes,
And stole upon the air, that even Silence
Was took ere she was ware, and wished she might
Deny her nature, and be never more,
Still to be so displac't. I was all ear,
And took in strains that might create a soul
Under the ribs of Death. But, oh! ere long
Too well I did perceive it was the voice
Of my most honour'd Lady, your dear sister.
Amaz'd I stood, harrow'd with grief and fear;
And "O poor hapless nightingale," thought I,
"How sweet thou sing'st, how near the deadly snare!"
Then down the lawns I ran with headlong hast,
Through paths and turnings oft'n trod by day,
Till, guided by mine ear, I found the place
Where that damn'd wisard, hid in sly disguise
(For so by certain signes I knew), had met
Already, ere my best speed could prevent,
The aidless innocent lady, his wish't prey;
Who gently ask't if he had seen such two,
Supposing him som neighbour villager.
Longer I durst not stay, but soon I guess't
Ye were the two she meant; with that I sprung
Into swift flight, till I had found you here;
But further know I not.

Sec. Bro. O night and shades,
How are ye joyn'd with hell in tripple knot
Against the unarm'd weakness of one virgin,
Alone and helpless! Is this the confidence
You gave me, brother?

Eld. Bro. Yes, and keep it still;
Lean on it safely; not a period
Shall be unsaid for me. Against the threats
Of malice or of sorcery, or that power
Which erring men call Chance, this I hold firm
Vertue may be assail'd, but never hurt,

Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
Yea, even that which Mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.
But evil on itself shall back recoyl,
And mix no more with goodness, when at last,
Gather'd like scum, and settl'd to itself,
It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consum'd. If this fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rott'nness,
And earth's base built on stubble. But com, let's on!
Against th' opposing will and arm of Heav'n
May never this just sword be lifted up;
But for that damn'd magician, let him be girt
With all the griesly legiöns that troop
Under the sooty flag of Acheron,
Harpyes and Hydras, or all the monstrous forms
'Twixt Africa and Inde, Ile find him out,
And force him to return his purchase back,
Or drag him by the curls to a foul death,
Curs'd as his life.

Spir. Alas! good ventrous youth,
I love thy courage yet, and bold emprise;
But here thy sword can do thee little stead.
Far other arms and other weapons must
Be those that quell the might of hellish charms.
He with his bare wand can unthred thy joynts,
And crumble all thy sinews.

Eld. Bro. Why, prethee, Shepherd,
How durst thou then thyself approach so neer
As to make this relation?

Spir. Care and utmost shifts
How to secure the Lady from surprisal
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to see to, yet well skill'd
In every vertuous plant and healing herb
That spreds her verdant leaf to th' morning ray.
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass

Would sit, and hearken even to extasie,
And in requital ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange and vigorous faculties.
Amongst the rest a small unsightly root,
But of divine effect, he cull'd me out.
The leaf was darkish, and had prickles on it,
But in another countrey, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flowre, but not in this soyl:
Unknown, and like esteem'd, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon;
And yet more med'cinal is it than that Moly
That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave.
He call'd it Hæmony, and gave it me,
And bad me keep it as of sov'ran use
'Gainst all inchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
Or gastly Furies' apparitiön.
I purs't it up, but little reck'ning made,
Till now that this extremity compell'd.
But now I find it true; for by this means
I knew the foul inchanter, though disguis'd,
Enter'd the very lime-twigs of his spells,
And yet came off. If you have this about you
(As I will give you when we go) you may
Boldly assault the necromancer's hall;
Where if he be, with dauntless hardihood
And brandish't blade rush on him: break his glass,
And shed the lushious liquor on the ground;
But sease his wand. Though he and his curst crew
Fierce signe of battail make, and menace high,
Or, like the sons of Vulcan, vomit smoak,
Yet will they soon retire, if he but shrink.

Eld. Bro. Thyrsis, lead on apace; Ile follow thee;
And som good angel bear a shield before us!

The Scene changes to a stately palace, set out with all manner of deliciousness: soft musick; tables spred with all dainties. COMUS *appears with his rabble, and the* LADY *set in an inchanted chair: to whom he offers his glass; which she puts by, and goes about to rise.*

Comus. Nay, Lady, sit. If I but wave this wand,
Your nerves are all chain'd up in alabaster,
And you a statue, or as Daphne was,
Root-bound, that fled Apollo.
Lady. Fool, do not boast.
Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde
With all thy charms, although this corporal rinde
Thou haste immanacl'd while Heav'n sees good.
Comus. Why are you vex't, Lady? why do you frown?
Here dwell no frowns, nor anger; from these gates
Sorrow flies far. See, here be all the pleasures
That fancy can beget on youthfull thoughts,
When the fresh blood grows lively, and returns
Brisk as the April buds in primrose-season.
And first behold this cordial julep here,
That flames and dances in his crystal bounds,
With spirits of balm and fragrant syrops mixt.
Not that Nepenthes which the wife of Thone
In Egypt gave to Jove-born Helena
Is of such power to stir up joy as this,
To life so friendly, or so cool to thirst.
Why should you be so cruel to yourself,
And to those dainty limms, which Nature lent
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the cov'nants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you receiv'd on other terms,
Scorning the unexempt conditiön
By which all mortal frailty must subsist,
Refreshment after toil, ease after pain,
That have been tir'd all day without repast,
And timely rest have wanted. But, fair virgin,
This will restore all soon.

Lady. 'Twill not, false traitor!
'Twill not restore the truth and honesty
That thou hast banish't from thy tongue with lies.
Was this the cottage and the safe abode
Thou told'st me of? What grim aspécts are these,
These oughly-headed monsters? Mercy guard me!
Hence with thy brew'd inchantments, foul deceiver!
Hast thou betrai'd my credulous innocence
With vizor'd falshood and base forgery?
And would'st thou seek again to trap me here
With lickerish baits, fit to ensnare a brute?
Were it a draft for Juno when she banquets,
I would not taste thy treasonous offer. None
But such as are good men can give good things;
And that which is not good is not delicious
To a well-govern'd and wise appetite.
Comus. O foolishnes of men! that lend their ears
To those budge doctors of the Stoick furr,
And fetch their precepts from the Cynick tub,
Praising the lean and sallow Abstinence!
Wherefore did Nature powre her bounties forth
With such a full and unwithdrawing hand,
Covering the earth with odours, fruits, and flocks,
Thronging the seas with spawn innumerable,
But all to please and sate the curious taste?
And set to work millions of spinning worms,
That in their green shops weave the smooth-hair'd silk,
To deck her sons; and, that no corner might
Be vacant of her plenty, in her own loyns
She hutch't th' all-worshipt ore and precious gems,
To store her children with. If all the world
Should, in a pet of temperance, feed on pulse,
Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but freize,
Th' All-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd,
Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd;
And we should serve him as a grudging master,
As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
And live like Nature's bastards, not her sons,

Who would be quite surcharg'd with her own weight,
And strangl'd with her waste fertility:
Th' earth cumber'd, and the wing'd air dark't with plumes,
The herds would over-multitude their lords;
The sea o'refraught would swel, and th' unsought diamonds
Would so emblaze the forhead of the deep,
And so bestudd with stars, that they below
Would grow inur'd to light, and com at last
To gaze upon the sun with shameles brows.
List, Lady; be not coy, and be not cozen'd
With that same vaunted name, Virginity.
Beauty is Nature's coyn; must not be hoorded,
But must be currant; and the good thereof
Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss,
Unsavoury in th' injoyment of itself.
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
It withers on the stalk with languish't head.
Beauty is Nature's brag, and must be shown
In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities,
Where most may wonder at the workmanship.
It is for homely features to keep home;
They had their name thence: coarse complexions
And cheeks of sorry grain will serve to ply
The sampler, and to teize the huswife's wooll.
What need a vermeil-tinctur'd lip for that,
Love-darting eyes, or tresses like the morn?
There was another meaning in these gifts;
Think what, and be adviz'd; you are but young yet.
Lady. I had not thought to have unlockt my lips
In this unhallow'd air, but that this jugler
Would think to charm my judgement, as mine eyes,
Obtruding false rules pranckt in reason's garb.
I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
And vertue has no tongue to check her pride.
Impostor! do not charge most innocent Nature,
As if she would her children should be riotous
With her abundance. She, good cateres,
Means her provision only to the good,

That live according to her sober laws,
And holy dictate of spare Temperance.
If every just man that now pines with want
Had but a moderate and beseeming share
Of that which lewdly-pamper'd Luxury
Now heaps upon som few with vast excess,
Nature's full blessings would be well-dispenc't
In unsuperfluous eeven proportiön,
And she no whit encomber'd with her store;
And then the Giver would be better thank't,
His praise due paid: for swinish gluttony
Ne're looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his Feeder. Shall I go on?
Or have I said anow? To him that dares
Arm his profane tongue with contemptuous words
Against the sun-clad power of chastity
Fain would I something say; — yet to what end?
Thou hast nor ear, nor soul, to apprehend
The sublime notion and high mystery
That must be utter'd to unfold the sage
And serious doctrine of Virginity;
And thou art worthy that thou shouldst not know
More happiness than this thy present lot.
Enjoy your dear wit, and gay rhetorick,
That hath so well been taught her dazling fence;
Thou art not fit to hear thyself convinc't.
Yet, should I try, the uncontroulèd worth
Of this pure cause would kindle my rap't spirits
To such a flame of sacred vehemence
That dumb things would be mov'd to sympathize,
And the brute Earth would lend her nerves, and shake,
Till all thy magick structures, rear'd so high,
Were shatter'd into heaps o're thy false head.

Comus. She fables not. I feel that I do fear
Her words set off by som superior power;
And, though not mortal, yet a cold shuddring dew
Dips me all o're, as when the wrath of Jove

Speaks thunder and the chains of Erebus
To som of Saturn's crew. I must dissemble,
And try her yet more strongly. — Com, no more!
This is meer moral babble, and direct
Against the canon laws of our foundation.
I must not suffer this; yet 'tis but the lees
And setlings of a melancholy blood.
But this will cure all streight; one sip of this
Will bathe the drooping spirits in delight
Beyond the bliss of dreams. Be wise, and taste . . .

The BROTHERS *rush in with swords drawn, wrest his glass out of his hand, and break it against the ground: his rout make sign of resistance, but are all driven in. The* ATTENDANT SPIRIT *comes in.*

Spir. What! have you let the false enchanter scape?
O ye mistook; ye should have snatcht his wand,
And bound him fast. Without his rod revers't,
And backward mutters of dissevering power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixt and motionless.
Yet stay: be not disturb'd; now I bethink me,
Some other means I have which may be us'd,
Which once of Melibœus old I learnt,
The soothest shepherd that e'er pip't on plains.
There is a gentle Nymph not far from hence,
That with moist curb sways the smooth Severn stream:
Sabrina is her name: a virgin pure;
Whilom she was the daughter of Locrine,
That had the scepter from his father Brute.
She, guiltless damsel, flying the mad pursuit
Of her enragèd stepdam, Guendolen,
Commended her fair innocence to the flood
That stay'd her flight with his cross-flowing course.
The water-nymphs, that in the bottom play'd,
Held up their pearlèd wrists, and took her in,
Bearing her straight to aged Nereus' hall;

Who, piteous of her woes, rear'd her lank head,
And gave her to his daughters to imbathe
In nectar'd lavers strew'd with asphodil,
And through the porch and inlet of each sense
Dropt in ambrosial oils, till she reviv'd,
And underwent a quick immortal change,
Made Goddess of the river. Still she retains
Her maid'n gentlenes, and oft at eeve
Visits the herds along the twilight meadows,
Helping all urchin blasts, and ill-luck signes
That the shrewd medling elfe delights to make,
Which she with pretious viol'd liquors heals:
For which the shepherds, at their festivals,
Carrol her goodnes lowd in rustick layes,
And throw sweet garland wreaths into her stream
Of pancies, pinks, and gaudy daffadils.
And, as the old swain said, she can unlock
The clasping charm, and thaw the numming spell,
If she be right invok't in warbled song;
For maid'nhood she loves, and will be swift
To aid a virgin, such as was herself,
In hard-besetting need. This will I try,
And adde the power of som adjuring verse.

Song

Sabrina fair,
Listen where thou art sitting
Under the glassie, cool, translucent wave,
In twisted braids of lillies knitting
The loose train of thy amber-dropping hair;
Listen for dear honour's sake,
Goddess of the silver lake,
Listen and save!

Listen, and appear to us,
In name of great Oceanus,
By the earth-shaking Neptune's mace,
And Tethys' grave majestick pace;

By hoary Nereus' wrincled look,
And the Carpathian wisard's hook;
By scaly Triton's winding shell,
And old sooth-saying Glaucus' spell;
By Leucothea's lovely hands,
And her son that rules the strands;
By Thetis' tinsel-slipper'd feet,
And the songs of Sirens sweet;
By dead Parthenopè's dear tomb,
And fair Ligea's golden comb,
Wherewith she sits on diamond rocks
Sleeking her soft alluring locks;
By all the nymphs that nightly dance
Upon thy streams with wily glance;
Rise, rise, and heave thy rosie head
From thy coral-pav'n bed,
And bridle in thy headlong wave,
Till thou our summons answer'd have.
Listen and save!

SABRINA *rises, attended by Water-nymphs, and sings,*

By the rushy-fringèd bank,
Where grows the willow and the osier dank,
My sliding chariot stayes,
Thick set with agat, and the azurn sheen
Of turkis blew, and emrauld green,
That in the channel strayes:
Whilst from off the waters fleet
Thus I set my printless feet
O're the cowslip's velvet head,
That bends not as I tread.
Gentle swain, at thy request
I am here!
Spir. Goddess dear,
We implore thy powerful hand
To undo the charmèd band
Of true virgin here distrest

Through the force and through the wile
Of unblest inchanter vile.
Sabr. Shepherd, 'tis my office best
To help insnarèd chastity.
Brightest Lady, look on me.
Thus I sprinkle on thy brest
Drops that from my fountain pure
I have kept of pretious cure;
Thrice upon thy finger's tip,
Thrice upon thy rubied lip:
Next this marble venom'd seat,
Smear'd with gumms of glutenous heat,
I touch with chaste palms moist and cold.
Now the spell hath lost his hold,
And I must haste ere morning hour
To wait in Amphitritè's bowr.

SABRINA *descends, and the* LADY *rises out of her seat.*

Spir. Virgin, daughter of Locrine,
Sprung of old Anchises' line,
May thy brimmèd waves for this
Their full tribute never miss
From a thousand petty rills,
That tumble down the snowy hills:
Summer drouth or singèd air
Never scorch thy tresses fair,
Nor wet October's torrent flood
Thy molten crystal fill with mudd;
May thy billows rowl ashoar
The beryl and the golden ore;
May thy lofty head be crown'd
With many a tower and terras round,
And here and there thy banks upon
With groves of myrrhe and cinnamon.
Com, Lady; while Heaven lends us grace,
Let us fly this cursèd place,
Lest the sorcerer us entice
With som other new device.

Not a waste or needless sound
Till we com to holier ground.
I shall be your faithfull guide
Through this gloomy covert wide;
And not many furlongs thence
Is your Father's residence,
Where this night are met in state
Many a friend to gratulate
His wish't presence, and beside
All the swains that there abide
With jiggs and rural dance resort.
We shall catch them at their sport,
And our sudden coming there
Will double all their mirth and chere.
Com, let us haste; the stars grow high,
But Night sits monarch yet in the mid sky.

The Scene changes, presenting Ludlow Town, and the President's Castle: then com in Countrey-Dancers; after them the ATTENDANT SPIRIT, *with the* TWO BROTHERS *and the* LADY.

Song

Spir. Back, shepherds, back! Anough your play
Till next sun-shine holiday.
Here be, without duck or nod,
Other trippings to be trod
Of lighter toes, and such court guise
As Mercury did first devise
With the mincing Dryades
On the lawns and on the leas.

This second Song presents them to their Father and Mother.

Noble Lord and Lady bright,
I have brought ye new delight.
Here behold so goodly grown
Three fair branches of your own.
Heav'n hath timely tri'd their youth,

Their faith, their patience, and their truth,
And sent them here through hard assays
With a crown of deathless praise,
To triumph in victorious dance
O'er sensual folly and intemperance.

The dances ended, the SPIRIT *epiloguizes,*

Spir. To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that ly
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky.
There I suck the liquid air,
All amidst the gardens fair
Of Hesperus, and his daughters three
That sing about the golden tree.
Along the crispèd shades and bowres
Revels the spruce and jocond Spring;
The Graces and the rosie-boosom'd Howres
Thither all their bounties bring.
There eternal Summer dwels,
And west winds with musky wing
About the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smels.
Iris there with humid bow
Waters the odorous banks, that blow
Flowers of more mingled hew
Than her purfl'd scarf can shew,
And drenches with Elysian dew
(List, mortals, if your ears be true)
Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound,
In slumbers soft; and on the ground
Sadly sits th' Assyrian queen.
But far above, in spangled sheen,
Celestial Cupid, her fam'd son, advanc't
Holds his dear Psyche, sweet intranc't

After her wandering labours long,
Till free consent the gods among
Make her his eternal bride,
And from her fair unspotted side
Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy; so Jove hath sworn.
But now my task is smoothly don:
I can fly, or I can run
Quickly to the green earth's end,
Where the bow'd welkin slow doth bend,
And from thence can soar as soon
To the corners of the moon.
Mortals, that would follow me,
Love Vertue; she alone is free.
She can teach ye how to clime
Higher than the spheary chime;
Or, if Vertue feeble were,
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

SONNETS

II

ON HIS HAVING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE

How soon hath Time, the suttle theef of youth,
Stoln on his wing my three-and-twentieth yeer!
My hasting dayes flie on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth
That I to manhood am arriv'd so near;
And inward ripenes doth much less appear,
That som more timely-happy spirits indu'th.
Yet, be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure eev'n
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n.
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye.

XVI

To the Lord General Cromwell, May, 1652

ON THE PROPOSALS OF CERTAIN MINISTERS AT THE COMMITTEE FOR PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL

Cromwell, our chief of men, that through a cloud
Not of war only, but detractions rude,
Guided by faith and matchless fortitude,
To peace and truth thy glorious way hast plough'd,
And on the neck of crownèd Fortune proud
Hast rear'd God's trophies, and his work pursu'd,
While Darwent stream, with blood of Scots imbru'd,
And Dunbar field, resound thy praises loud,
And Worcester's laureat wreath: yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renowned than War: new foes arise,
Threatning to bind our souls with secular chains.
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose Gospel is their maw.

XIX

On his Blindness

When I consider how my light is spent
Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest He returning chide,
"Doth God exact day-labour, light deny'd?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his milde yoak, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o're land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and waite."

XXII

To Mr. Cyriac Skinner

upon his blindness

Cyriac, this three years' day these eyes, though clear,
To outward view, of blemish or of spot,
Bereft of light, their seeing have forgot;
Nor to their idle orbs doth sight appear
Of sun, or moon, or star, throughout the year,
Or man, or woman. Yet I argue not
Against Heav'n's hand or will, nor bate one jot
Of heart or hope, but still bear up and steer
Right onward. What supports me, dost thou ask?
The conscience, friend, to have lost them overply'd
In Libertie's defence, my noble task,
Of which all Europe rings from side to side,
This thought might lead me through the world's vain mask
Content, though blind, had I no better guide.

2. THE AGE OF THE RESTORATION

The year 1660 is an important date in English history and literature. Cromwell was dead, Puritanism had lost its political ascendency, the Stuarts had been reseated upon the throne, and with the cessation of the internecine struggle for power a new and modern England had sprung into life. In many ways it was a strong and self-reliant England that now arose. Science and industry took vast strides. "Reason" and "intellect" were hailed as watchwords of the coming time. Men centred their attention on the world of actual conditions rather than on that of emotional ideals and disputed rights. Though Englishmen of the mass treasured freedom and exalted self-reliance, individuality of thought and action gave place to a desire for conformity with fixed and generally approved standards. Though the Puritan leaven still worked in the lump, and always will work, the people as a whole frankly enjoyed life, and many turned to pleasures which contrasted oddly with the "other worldliness" of the Puritan age. In the circles of court and of London society the temperance and re-

straint of the earlier time were only too gladly flung to the winds. The moral degradation of the king and his followers is almost beyond belief. In their estimation, to be honest and virtuous was to be held a Puritan; and the Puritans were objects of unsparing ridicule and contempt. The effect of this social revolution upon literature may be easily imagined; it was at once apparent in a debased moral tone, especially of the drama. The theatres were again thrown open, and a school of dramatists arose, vigorous and witty in style, yet unparalleled in deliberate indecency.

It must not be inferred, however, that this debasement of moral tone was the only effect of the Restoration upon literature. It was not, indeed, the principal effect. Charles II, on returning to his country, brought with him from his exile in France a taste for the literary style and literary models of the French. Literature in France, at this time the most brilliant on the continent, attached great importance to form, and was elaborating to a remarkable degree the theory and art of criticism. The poetry of England, save in the hands of Milton and a very few others, had, as we have remarked, become extravagant and fantastic in the extreme. Reform was evidently necessary; the new conditions made reform possible. Finish and neatness of expression were now desired; and the French masters of the critical art were busy devising rules by which this finish and neatness, this exactness and lucidity, might be obtained. All this was very congenial to the newly awakened critical intellectuality of England; and the result was that the Italian influence, which had been stimulating English poetry for over two centuries and a half, now gave way to a century of influence on the part of France. We shall find poetry, during the period of French influence, correct but cold, intellectual rather than emotional, satiric and didactic rather than lyric and passionate. Towering above the group of lesser writers who devoted themselves to this new fashion of literature, stands a splendidly intellectual representative of the spirit of his time: the poet, dramatist, and critic, JOHN DRYDEN.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631–1700)

"I confess," says Dryden, "that my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humor of this be for low comedy, small accidents, and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it." This statement explains why John Dryden, brilliant thinker and master-critic though he was, cannot be placed with the seers of English poetry, certainly not with that highest group of those who are seers and creators in one. He was incomparably the most distinguished author of his age; but it was not an imaginative age, therefore not an age favorable to the truest and most lasting kind of poetry. It was an age of criti-

cism rather than of creation; and this poet reflects the spirit of his times in being a great critic rather than a great literary artist. To usher in a vital alteration of literary style was his mission. He aimed at virile thinking, subtle perhaps, but heavy never nor often profound, at accurate form, elegant diction, polished style, perfect versification — and in all these respects he succeeded admirably. The heroic couplet, which he used almost exclusively in his poems, was well suited to their aim and spirit. He was a master of satire and an adept in the sword-play of wit. But he lacks sympathetic and interpretative imagination, has but little love for nature, distrusts tenderness and emotion, and is sadly wanting in the stability which comes from fixed moral principles and high resolves. Some of his dramas display creative power, but not of the first quality. In prose he shines, and in his historical and critical judgments of literature he stands forth as the most commanding literary personality of his age.

1631–1663. — Dryden was born in Northamptonshire, of good family, and was educated, first at Westminster School, and afterward in Trinity College, Cambridge. Upon his graduation, in 1657, he went to London, and the next year produced some *Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell*. Two years later, however, in common with the great mass of his countrymen, his sentiments underwent a change; and on the restoration of Charles II he wrote a poem to celebrate that event.

1663–1681. — In 1663 he married, and, as a means of livelihood, began to write for the stage. Although his twenty-eight plays exhibit the vices that characterize the Restoration drama, their merit was at least sufficient to procure for him a reputation as the first dramatist of his time. The drama, however, was not completely suited to Dryden's cast of mind. Much more vital than his plays were the critical essays which preceded some of them. Here the author has not only assisted in laying the foundation for modern English criticism, but has also elaborated a style which is far more like modern prose than is that of any writer before his time. In 1670 he was made Poet Laureate, with a salary of two hundred pounds a year. For the next ten years he wrote little beside his plays.

1681–1689. — In 1681, at fifty years of age, the poet entered upon his most important sphere of literary activity: he began to write satires. Of these splendid creations the first was *Absalom and Achitophel*, soon followed by the *Medal*, *MacFlecknoe*, and others; and in all of them the author shows his superiority not only over the satirists of his own time, but of most times. During this period he adopted the Roman Catholic faith, and, in 1687, published the *Hind and the Panther*. In this a plea

is made for the Church of Rome, which is portrayed as a milk-white hind. The reasoning is acute, and the verse musical.

1689–1700. — In 1689, on the accession of William and Mary, the poet, as a Catholic loyalist, lost his laureateship and other offices, and was again obliged to seek an income from his pen. He turned to the drama once more, but without success. His next venture was an excellent verse translation of Virgil, which he finished in 1697. Finally, in 1699, he finished his so-called *Fables*, in which the stories of Chaucer and others were paraphrased. One year later he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey, beside the tomb of Chaucer. His more valuable work as poet had all been done within the last nineteen years of his life. No other English poet, save Cowper, matured so late as he, and very few have ruled, like him, supremely as literary dictators of their time.

If we were to select for reading the most *typical* of Dryden's non-dramatic poems, it would be, no doubt, from the satires. The *Absalom and Achitophel* will liberally repay the student who is able to give mature attention to the history involved. Since the satires, however, very largely lose their flavor unless the reader is acquainted with the men and motives that inspired them, we have passed over these, and selected instead one of the two odes upon which rests Dryden's fame as a lyric poet. It will, perhaps, illustrate better than any other kind of poem the author's power of language and dexterity in versification.

ALEXANDER'S FEAST;

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC

A Song in Honour of St. Cecilia's Day: 1697

I

'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son.
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were plac'd around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound;
(So shou'd desert in arms be crown'd.)

The lovely Thais, by his side,
Sate like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flow'r of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Chorus

Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

2

Timotheus, plac'd on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touch'd the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heav'nly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the pow'r of mighty love.)
A dragon's fiery form bely'd the God;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia press'd;
And, while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waste he curl'd,
And stamp'd an image of himself, a sov'raign of the world.
The list'ning crowd admire the lofty sound,
A present deity, they shout around;
A present deity, the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

Chorus

With ravish'd ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

3

The praise of Bacchus then the sweet musician sung,
Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young:
The jolly god in triumph comes;
Sound the trumpets, beat the drums;
Flush'd with a purple grace
He shews his honest face;
Now give the hautboys breath; he comes, he comes.
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain;
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Chorus

Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure;
Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure,
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

4

Sooth'd with the sound the king grew vain;
Fought all his battails o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;

And, while he heaven and earth defy'd,
Chang'd his hand, and check'd his pride.
He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft pity to infuse;
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltring in his blood.
Deserted at his utmost need
By those his former bounty fed,
On the bare earth expos'd he lyes,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate,
Revolveing in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

Chorus

Revolveing in his alter'd soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

5

The mighty master smil'd to see
That love was in the next degree:
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honour but an empty bubble;
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying:

Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee.
The many rend the skies with loud applause;
So Love was crown'd, but Musique won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

Chorus

The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gaz'd on the fair
Who caus'd his care,
And sigh'd and look'd, sigh'd and look'd,
Sigh'd and look'd, and sigh'd again:
At length, with love and wine at once oppress'd,
The vanquish'd victor sunk upon her breast.

6

Now strike the golden lyre again;
A lowder yet, and yet a lowder strain.
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouze him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark, the horrid sound
Has rais'd up his head,
As awak'd from the dead,
And amaz'd he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries;
See the Furies arise;
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!

Those are Grecian ghosts, that in battail were slayn,
And unbury'd remain
Inglorious on the plain:
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glitt'ring temples of their hostile gods.
The princes applaud with a furious joy;
And the king seyz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Hellen, fir'd another Troy.

Chorus

And the king seyz'd a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way,
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Hellen, fir'd another Troy.

7

Thus, long ago,
Ere heaving bellows learn'd to blow,
While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus, to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Cou'd swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown:
He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down.

Chorus

At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarg'd the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
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CHAPTER VI

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1. THE CLASSICAL OR CONVENTIONAL SCHOOL

THE intellectual and artificial school of poetry which, as we have said, arose not long after the accession of Charles II, continued, without any considerable change, through the greater part of the eighteenth century. Taste was still largely governed by precepts borrowed from France, which, in its turn, pretended to be governed by the practice of the masters of Greece and Rome. But the French cultivated few of the ancient masters, save Horace and Juvenal, and these they followed at a very decided distance. Poetry in England remained chiefly satirical, didactic, pseudo-philosophical. In their desire to avoid the extravagances of the later Elizabethans, writers carefully avoided not only the recklessly imaginative manner and the free and easy blank-verse form, but even the subjects of the earlier poetry. Dramas and lyrics expressing the passions of man, his conduct in the moment of dramatic activity, his yearning for adventure and his love of nature, were discarded for critical essays in verse upon the institutions of man and the conventions of society, or stanzas of rhetorical diction and ingenious wit tinkling in the breeze of artificial emotion. The attempt of any poet to overleap the boundaries within which the set rules of the art had confined him was regarded as proof that he was really no poet. Nothing could be beautiful if irregularly beautiful. Hence individuality was repressed, and writers retained scarcely any other mark of personal distinction than the degree in which wit was keen or style laboriously elegant.

The uniformity of style in the writers of this school is accentuated by the inflexibility of the verse form which it had adopted, and which held almost complete sway in English poetry for over a hundred years. This was the heroic couplet, consisting of two iambic pentameter lines connected by rhyme — a form of which Macaulay says in his essay on Addison: "The art of arranging words in this measure, so that the

lines may flow smoothly, that the accents may fall correctly, that the rhymes may strike the ear strongly, and that there may be a pause at the end of every distich, is an art as mechanical as that of mending a kettle or shoeing a horse, and may be learned by any human being who has sense enough to learn anything. But, like other mechanical arts, it was gradually improved by means of many experiments and many failures. It was reserved for Pope to discover the trick, to make himself complete master of it, and to teach it to everybody else." Though Macaulay, in this passage; shows not a little of his characteristic dogmatism, and underestimates the skill requisite to write good heroic couplets, at least two of his statements are unquestionably true: first, that ALEXANDER POPE made himself absolute master of this form of verse; and secondly, that many of his contemporaries imitated him. These two facts explain Pope's leadership of what a distinguished critic designates as the "artificial-conventional school of verse," with its ideals of emotional reserve and mental equipoise, its methods of formal correctness, point, and finish. The heroic couplet in which they wrote was, as we have already noticed, an old and common English measure. But in Chaucer and other poets who had early used the couplet, as well as in Keats and Swinburne and other poets of the nineteenth century who have since employed it, the thought runs on connectedly from line to line and couplet to couplet, stopping to take breath somewhere *within* a line, if it pleases, in a manner that would not have been tolerated by the rule of the end-stopt couplet and unit line used in the eighteenth century (see INTRODUCTION). The influence of Dryden's personality had been such as to popularize even rugged and vigorous couplets as a vehicle of expression. When Pope met the demands of his age, not only with couplets perfect in their sprightliness and polish, but also with phraseology unparalleled for conciseness and lucidity, he rose at once to a position of acknowledged leadership among the poets of his time.

The influences of this dictatorship were both bad and good. On the one hand, scores of writers who, as Macaulay says, "never blundered on one happy thought or expression," in their attempt to follow the lead of Pope, inflicted upon the world "reams of couplets" entirely mechanical and artificial, and utterly devoid of poetry. On the other hand, subsequent English poetry could ill afford to dispense with the characteristics indirectly derived from the manner of Pope and his disciples. These writers of the "Classical school" labored from the first for a neatness, condensation, and perfection of style, such as had hitherto been strangers to English verse, but which, once attained, have never since been wholly disregarded. No poet to-day could write in the untrained, formless manner that marks, and so frequently mars, some very excellent early Elizabethans. The influence of Pope's

school remained long after the school had passed away. But, as we shall see, neither the authority of Pope in the first half of the century, nor that of his great disciple, DR. JOHNSON (1709–1784), in the latter half, was sufficient to prevent a gradual reactionary movement which, before the century was over, should again usher in the poetic ideals of Chaucer, Milton, and Spenser in place of those of Dryden, Johnson, and Pope

ALEXANDER POPE (1688–1744)

If Wordsworth was right in saying that "all good poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling," Alexander Pope was certainly not a good poet. Indeed, he fails to meet almost any standard which the present day would advance as a test of what is in spirit poetic. Like his master Dryden, he cared nothing for nature, and gave her scant attention in his verse. Like Dryden also, he has little emotion, little passion, little inspiration, little power of inspiring others. He is rarely inventive or strikingly original; he pretends to no power of imagination; he brings no lofty message to the world. He is the poet of "the town," with its fashionable and conventional life — the "life of the court and the ballroom"; the poet of biting satire and caustic criticism; the poet of the transitory and fleeting. Yet the time has been when Alexander Pope was considered the greatest of English poets, and a model for all future poetry.

If we limit our view of poetry, as above, to its *content* only, its imaginative thought and feeling, we cannot understand the verdict of the eighteenth century. But so to restrict our judgment would be manifestly unjust, for poetry resides in the form as well as in the content. In the *form* of his poetic production — its fitness, finish, and grace, its compactness of expression, its terseness of epigram, its darting wit — Pope stands almost without a rival. His ideals are absolute correctness and rigid self-criticism. He aims to express what he has to say in the very best possible form, and his success is absolute. No English writer, outside of Shakespeare, has given us so many oft-quoted and quotable lines, simply because no one has expressed his thoughts so compactly or so well. Indeed, none of our poets has had such an influence in shaping a literary epoch as Pope had in the eighteenth century. Though the critics of to-day do not accord him a place in the highest order of poets, they rank him, like Dryden, among the most important factors in the development of our literature.

1688–1712. — Pope was born in London in 1688. His education, since his father was a Roman Catholic, was first under the tuition of Catholic priests; after the age of twelve, however, under his own guid

ance. When a mere lad he resolved to devote himself to poetry; and, aided by his father's criticism, he commenced at a very early age to write. He was badly deformed and sickly all his life; whatever he has accomplished marks, therefore, the triumph of will and artistic ambition in a lifelong conflict with disease. His first published work was the *Pastorals*. These appeared when he was twenty-one, and were followed two years later by his *Essay on Criticism*, and the first cast, in two cantos, of *The Rape of the Lock*. The poet's success was immediate and unquestioned.

1712–1728. — In 1713 appeared *Windsor Forest*, and the next year the enlarged form of *The Rape of the Lock*, now ordinarily read. Shortly afterward Pope removed from Binfield, the home of his childhood, to Chiswick, and then to Twickenham, towns on the Thames, a few miles west of London. From 1715 to 1720 he was at work on a translation of Homer's *Iliad*. The result has been characterized as "a very pretty poem, but not Homer." Indeed, Pope had little knowledge of the Greek language, and absolutely no sympathy with its spirit. So, although the translation brought him money and fame, and although it is still better known than any other, it is nevertheless a very poor medium through which to gain acquaintance with the greatest of epic poets. In 1725 a translation of the *Odyssey* appeared. Three years later, when he was forty years of age, the poet sent out from his comfortable retreat of Twickenham the *Dunciad*, a bitter satire upon the minor poets and critics who had chanced to incur his displeasure.

1728–1744. — The rest of his life was spent in writing a series of half-philosophical, half-satirical poems, which, though they may fail in value when considered as wholes, are certainly unique as armories of terse and trenchant lines. Among these poems are the famous *Essay on Man* (1733); a revision and enlargement of the *Dunciad* ten years later; and various epistles, satires, and miscellaneous verses, between these two dates. In 1744, just after his fifty-sixth birthday, Pope died. His friends and early admirers had nearly all preceded him to the grave, or, if still living, were estranged by his irritability, his jealousy and suspicion, and his underhanded methods of procedure. His keenness and his vital powers were clearly on the wane; disease was making inroads upon his feeble body. The end, under such conditions, was probably not unwelcome.

It is no easy matter to select from the works of Pope the parts which are best deserving study. The epistles and satires depend for their appreciation upon an acquaintance with the circumstances that called them forth. The *Essay on Man*, despite its brilliant lines and passages, appears superficial to readers of to-day. *The Rape of the Lock*, however,

requires for an enjoyment of its sparkling and fanciful wit no unreasonably minute acquaintance with the personalities or scenes involved; and since it is probably the most highly finished of Pope's purely fanciful creations and one of the finest mock-heroic poems ever written, we have selected it. To insert here the whole of it would be to give Pope almost an undue importance. To present only one or two cantos, on the other hand, would be merely to spoil a delightful story. We have, therefore, decided to reproduce the poem as it was first printed in *Lintot's Miscellany* (1712), — the form that made its author famous, and that Addison termed "*merum sal*" — pure wit. When Pope proposed to enlarge the first edition of *The Rape of the Lock*, Addison advised against the suggestion, and by so doing turned Pope from a warm friend to a bitter enemy, for the well-meant advice was interpreted as proceeding from jealousy. The enlargement has added, to be sure, several clever pictures, and is one of the most successful revisions ever made of a great poem. Still many will be found to agree with Addison and with Mr. Croker, a well-known critic of Pope, who says: "The original poem tells the actual story and exhibits a picture of real manners with so much wit and poetry, but also with so much simplicity and clearness, that I can well imagine that Addison might be alarmed at the proposition of introducing sylphs and gnomes into a scene of common life already so admirably described. Even now, with the advantage of seeing all the brilliancy with which Pope has worked out what Addison thought an unfortunate conception, I will not deny that such is the charm of truth that I have lately read the first sketch with more interest than its more fanciful and more gorgeous successor, which really seems something like a beauty oppressed with the weight and splendor of her ornaments."

Indeed, we believe that this shorter form of the poem will prove in many ways more suitable to the needs of the student than its longer, more difficult, more fantastic, and sometimes somewhat wearisome revision. He must remember, however, that this shorter edition, though furnishing an excellent example of Pope at his best, is not what is now ordinarily called *The Rape of the Lock*. Should he wish to study the whole poem, he will do well to compare this earlier with the enlarged form, to be found in any collection of its author's works. He will notice that three or four lines were omitted in the revision; a dozen or so recast and considerably changed; some thirty or forty very slightly altered, often in only a single word; and about four hundred and sixty added, principally in the introduction of such "machinery" as the Sylphs, the game of Ombre, and the Cave of Spleen. These changes may be summarized as follows, no account being made of merely verbal or minor changes: —

Final edition Canto.	*No. of lines*	*Contains of the earlier edition*	*And adds*
I	148	Canto I, ll. 1–18	— the description of the Sylphs and of Belinda's toilet.
II . . .	142	Canto I, ll. 19–64	— the plans of the Sylphs.
III . . .	178	Canto I, ll. 65–142	— the game of Ombre.
IV . . .	176	Canto II, ll. 143–231	— the Gnomes and the Cave of Spleen.
V . .	150	Canto II, ll. 232–334	— the Speech of Clarissa.[1]

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM

[ORIGINAL EDITION OF 1712]

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos,
Sed juvat hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis.
— MARTIAL'S EPIGRAMS: LIB. XII, EP. 84.

CANTO I

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty quarrels rise from trivial things,
I sing. This verse to C—L, Muse! is due;
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view;
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
If She inspire, and He approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
Cou'd make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
And dwells such rage in softest bosoms then,
And lodge such daring souls in little men?
Sol thro' white curtains did his beams display,
And op'd those eyes which brighter shine than they,
Shock just had giv'n himself the rousing shake,

[1] First introduced into the quarto edition of 1717. Canto V, of the edition of 1714, save for a few lines relating to the Sylphs, was practically identical with the last hundred lines of the first edition. The final edition, as it now stands, contains seven hundred and ninety-four lines.

And nymphs prepar'd their chocolate to take;
Thrice the wrought slipper knocked against the ground,
And striking watches the tenth hour resound.
Belinda rose, and midst attending dames,
Lanch'd on the bosom of the Silver Thames:
A train of well-drest youths around her shone,
And ev'ry eye was fix'd on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling Cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and Infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes, and as unfix'd as those.
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft' she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if Belles had faults to hide;
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forgive 'em all.
This Nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourish'd two Locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspir'd to deck
With shining ringlets her smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy sprindges we the birds betray,
Slight lines of hair surprize the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.
Th' advent'rous Baron the bright locks admir'd;
He saw, he wish'd, and to the prize aspir'd.
Resolv'd to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a Lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attain'd his ends.
For this, e'er Phœbus rose, he had implor'd
Propitious heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r ador'd,
But chiefly Love — to Love an Altar built

Of twelve vast French Romances, neatly gilt.
There lay the sword-knot Sylvia's hands had sewn,
With Flavia's busk that oft had wrapped his own:
A fan, a garter, half a pair of gloves,
And all the trophies of his former loves.
With tender Billets-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r;
The rest the winds dispers'd in empty air.

Close by those meads, for ever crown'd with flow'rs,
Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
There stands a structure of majestic frame,
Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
Here Britain's statesmen oft' the fall foredoom
Of foreign Tyrants and of Nymphs at home;
Here thou, great ANNA! whom three realms obey,
Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes Tea.

Hither our nymphs and heroes did resort,
To taste a while the pleasures of a Court:
In various talk the cheerful hours they past,
Of who was bit, or who capotted last:
This speaks the glory of the British Queen,
And that describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Now when, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray;
When hungry Judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
When merchants from th' Exchange return in peace,
And the long labours of the Toilet cease,
The board's with cups and spoons, alternate, crown'd,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round;
On shining Altars of Japan they raise

The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze;
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tyde.
At once they gratify their smell and taste,
While frequent cups prolong the rich repaste.
Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see thro' all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the Baron's brain
New Stratagems, the radiant Lock to gain.
Ah cease, rash youth! desist e'er 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's Fate!
Chang'd to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injur'd hair!
But when to mischief mortals bend their mind,
How soon fit instruments of ill they find!
Just then Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edg'd weapon from her shining case:
So Ladies, in Romance, assist their Knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight.
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends;
This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
He first expands the glitt'ring Forfex wide
T' inclose the Lock, now joins it to divide;
One fatal stroke the sacred hair does sever
From the fair head, for ever and for ever!
The living fires come flashing from her eyes,
And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
Not louder shrieks by dames to heav'n are cast,
When husbands die, or lapdogs breathe their last;
Or when rich China vessels, fal'n from high,
In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie!
"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,"
The victor cry'd; "the glorious Prize is mine!
While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
Or in a coach and six the British Fair,
As long as Atalantis shall be read,

Or the small pillow grace a Lady's bed,
While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
When num'rous waxlights in bright order blaze,
While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!
What Time wou'd spare, from Steel receives its date,
And monuments, like men, submit to Fate!
Steel did the labour of the Gods destroy,
And strike to dust th' aspiring tow'rs of Troy;
Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel
The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel!"

CANTO II

But anxious cares the pensive nymph opprest,
And secret passions labour'd in her breast.
Not youthful kings in battel seiz'd alive,
Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
Not ardent lover robb'd of all his bliss,
Not ancient lady when refus'd a kiss,
Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinn'd awry,
E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
As thou, sad Virgin! for thy ravish'd Hair.
While her rack'd soul repose and peace requires,
The fierce Thalestris fans the rising fires.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cry'd,
(And Hampton's ecchoes "Wretch'd maid!" reply'd)
"Was it for this you took such constant care
Combs, bodkins, leads, pomatums to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound?
For this with tort'ring irons wreath'd around?
Oh had the youth been but content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these!
Gods! shall the ravisher display this hair,
While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
Honour forbid! at whose unrivall'd shrine

Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey,
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,
And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend!
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Expos'd through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heighten'd by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde-park Circus grow,
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to Chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish all!"
  She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her Beau demand the precious hairs:
Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane,
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box open'd, then the case,
And thus broke out — "My Lord! why, what the devil!
Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest — nay, prithee, pox!
Give her the hair" — he spoke, and rapp'd his box.
  "It grieves me much," reply'd the Peer again,
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain;
But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clip'd from the lovely head where once it grew)
That, while my nostrils draw the vital air,
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke; and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.
  But see! the nymph in sorrow's pomp appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half drown'd in tears;
Now livid pale her cheeks, now glowing red,

On her heav'd bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she rais'd; and thus she said:
"For ever curs'd be this detested day,
Which snatch'd my best, my fav'rite curl away!
Happy! ah ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton-Court these eyes had never seen!
Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
By love of Courts to num'rous ills betray'd.
Oh had I rather un-admir'd remain'd
In some lone isle, or distant Northern land,
Where the gilt Chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn Ombre, none e'er taste Bohea!
There kept my charms conceal'd from mortal eye,
Like roses, that in desarts bloom and die.
What mov'd my mind with youthful Lords to rome?
Oh had I stay'd, and said my pray'rs at home!
'Twas this the morning omens did fortell;
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell;
The tott'ring China shook without a wind;
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind!
See the poor remnants of this slighted hair!
My hands shall rend what ev'n thy own did spare:
This, in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck;
The sister lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow's fate foresees its own;
Uncurl'd it hangs, the fatal sheers demands,
And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands."
She said; the pitying audience melt in tears;
But Fate and Jove had stopp'd the Baron's ears.
In vain Thalestris with reproach assails;
For who can move when fair Belinda fails?
Not half so fix'd the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begg'd and Dido rag'd in vain.
"To arms, to arms!" the bold Thalestris cries,
And swift as lightning to the combate flies.
All side in parties, and begin th' attack;
Fans clap, silks russle, and tough whalebones crack;

Heroes' and Heroins' shouts confus'dly rise,
And base and treble voices strike the skies.
No common weapons in their hands are found;
Like Gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.
So when bold Homer makes the Gods engage,
And heav'nly breasts with human passions rage;
'Gainst Pallas, Mars; Latona, Hermes arms;
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms;
Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around;
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound;
Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day!
While thro' the press enrag'd Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A Beau and Witling perish'd in the throng;
One dy'd in metaphor, and one in song.
"O cruel nymph! a living death I bear,"
Cry'd Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast:
"Those eyes are made so killing" — was his last.
Thus on Mæander's flow'ry margin lies
Th' expiring Swan, and as he sings he dies.
As bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepp'd in, and kill'd him with a frown;
She smil'd to see the doughty hero slain,
But at her smile the Beau reviv'd again.
Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the Men's wits against the lady's Hair.
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.
See, fierce Belinda on the Baron flies,
With more than usual lightning in her eyes;
Nor fear'd the Chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold Lord, with manly strength endu'd,
She with one finger and a thumb subdu'd:
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of Snuff the wily Virgin threw;

Sudden with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.
"Now meet thy fate," th' incens'd virago cry'd,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
"Boast not my fall," he said, "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low;
Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind;
All that I dread is leaving you behind!
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And still burn on in Cupid's flames, — alive."
"Restore the Lock!" she cries; and all around
"Restore the Lock!" the vaulted roofs rebound.
Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain
Roar'd for the handkerchief that caus'd his pain.
But see how oft' ambitious aims are cross'd,
And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost!
The Lock, obtain'd with guilt, and kept with pain,
In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain:
With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
So heav'n decrees! with heav'n who can contest?
Some thought it mounted to the Lunar sphere,
Since all that man e'er lost is treasur'd there.
There Heroes' wits are kept in pondrous vases,
And Beaus' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,
And lovers's hearts with ends of riband bound,
The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs,
The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs,
Cages for gnats, and chains to yoak a flea,
Dry'd butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.
But trust the Muse — she saw it upward rise,
Tho' mark'd by none but quick poetic eyes;
(Thus Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew,
To Proculus alone confess'd in view.)
A sudden Star, it shot thro' liquid air,
And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
Not Berenice's Locks first rose so bright,
The skies bespangling with dishevel'd light.

This the Beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
As through the moonlight shade they nightly stray,
And hail with music its propitious ray;
This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
When next he looks thro' Galilæo's eyes;
And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
Then cease, bright Nymph! to mourn thy ravish'd hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere!
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the Lock you lost:
For after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, your self shall die;
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This Lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

2. THE MOVEMENT OF REACTION

Although the mention of eighteenth-century English poetry is generally suggestive of the conventional school of Pope and Johnson, it must be noted that, contemporaneous with this school, almost from the very beginning of the century, there was proceeding another literary movement, destined in time to bring about a revolution in English letters as great as that which had resulted in the ascendency of the Classical school. This movement was fostered by a few poets, who, consciously or unconsciously, could not or would not be bound by the tenets of this school. Some of these poets discarded the heroic couplet and reverted to the verse forms as well as the poetic ideals of earlier English and North-European poetry; some, indeed, to the inspiration of the ancient classics. Others clung to the couplet and no doubt imagined that they were wholly in accord with the conventionalists, although their poetic sympathies were such as could never be satisfied with the ideals of Pope and his disciples. Passion, imagination, love of nature, — all of which had fallen into disrepute, — little by little reasserted themselves in the works of such writers; and thus very slowly, indefinitely, almost imperceptibly at first, the new poetry arose. For a new poetry it was, although, until the time of Burns, it was, to a large degree, held in check by the dominant authority of the other school.

The course of this movement in the history of eighteenth-century letters may be indicated by a brief mention of some of the more important poets concerned. The first to attain to any prominence was a Scotchman, JAMES THOMSON (1700–1748). Of him Saintsbury says in his *History of English Poetry:* "Thomson's poetical works are among the most important in the history of English poetry, although they cannot be exactly ranked among the best of English poems. Appearing as they did at the very same time with the most perfect and polished work of Pope, they served as an antidote to that great writer's 'town' poetry. Couched as the best of them were in blank verse, or in the Spenserian stanza, they showed a bold front to the insolent domination of the stopped couplet." Thomson's *Seasons* (1726–1730), although written largely in the formal, rhetorical language of the Classical school, nevertheless differs widely from that school in showing an "honest understanding" and sincere love of nature. Equally important as an influence in the new direction was the work of THOMAS GRAY. It is true that his poems are by no means free from the coldness and artificiality of the age; yet his gentle sympathy with man and nature, together with his ripe scholarship and intimate acquaintance with the best in the poetry of other lands, contributed to make him an inspirer of the new poetry rather than a confirmer of the old. As Stopford Brooke has said: "He stands clear and bright on the ridge between the old and the new. Having ascended through the old poetry, he saw the new landscape of song below him, felt its fresher air, and sent his own power into the men who arose after him." With Gray closes what may be regarded as the first period of the reactionary movement.

The opening of its second period is marked by three matters of import: first, the comparative barrenness of poetic achievement during the third quarter of the century; second, the renewal of interest in the romance of past ages, as evidenced by the successful publication of Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry;* and third, the literary dictatorship of Dr. Johnson, an ardent follower of Pope and a zealous advocate of the ideals of the Classical school. The conservatism of Johnson undoubtedly had much influence over the work of his intimate friend and companion, OLIVER GOLDSMITH. Indeed, Goldsmith is often classed among the conventional poets of the century. No doubt he tried to meet the requirements of the conventional school; no doubt he wrote some poems with a purpose as consciously didactic as was ever that of Pope. But the spirit of the artist was more potent than the purpose of the artificer; and, in spite of his heroic couplets and attempts at moralizing, in spite of Dr. Johnson and of his own adherence to conventional poetic theories, Goldsmith's truer instincts place him among the poets of the newer school.

During the latter years of this period of reaction the last taper of the conventional school flickered and went out. GEORGE CRABBE (1754–1832) and WILLIAM COWPER (1731–1800), like Goldsmith, both counted themselves of the tribe of Pope. Both used the regulation couplet; both tried to write in the regulation manner. But the sincere and realistic products of the Muse demonstrated the futility of clinging to a style from which the soul had escaped. Finally ROBERT BURNS, in his matchless songs, gave voice to strains such as for simplicity and sweetness had not been heard since the best days of the Elizabethans. Even he, when he exchanged his native dialect for literary English, at times showed curious traces of the earlier school; but, on the whole, the differences between Pope, who opened the century, and Burns, who closed it, were nearly world-wide. The forces of reaction had completed their work, and England was ready for the new Romantic school.

THOMAS GRAY (1716–1771)

The quiet, sober-minded Thomas Gray is frequently classed with Milton among the most scholarly of English poets. Gray's life was given almost entirely to self-culture. Probably no other man of his time in all Europe was so well read in modern literature, while few had a more intimate knowledge of the classics. As a result of this wide range of reading, he had developed a critical insight that might have contributed much to making him a great poet; but in Gray the creative impulse was largely lacking. If, like Pope or Wordsworth or Tennyson, he had resolutely confined himself to writing poetry, his rank as a poet would doubtless have been far higher than it is. His mind was clear and searching, his taste refined — almost fastidious, his power of expression of extraordinary fitness and finish. Though of no great imagination or originality, he was one of the first to achieve at least a partial emancipation from the thraldom of the Classical school. In spite of his talents, however, he is a poet only of the presentative or reflective class; yet one whom the world will never forget as the author of the *Elegy* — a production of sentiment dignified and temperate rather than profound, yet so wide in its appeal and so nearly perfect in expression that it is perhaps the best known and best loved poem in the English language.

1716–1741. — Gray was born in London in December, 1716. His father, though a man of some wealth, was extravagant, intemperate, and cruelly indifferent to his family. Hence the nurture and education of the youth were entirely devolved upon the mother. Young Gray became a pupil in Eton, where his mother's brother was a teacher, and thence he proceeded to Cambridge, which he entered at the age of eighteen. Four years later he left the university without taking a degree, and with

Horace Walpole, a fellow-student at both Eton and Cambridge, began a tour of the Continent which lasted till 1741.

1741–1754. — Gray's father died in 1741, after having squandered nearly all his fortune. Accordingly the next year the poet's mother moved to the home of her widowed sister, at the village of Stoke Pogis, in southern Buckinghamshire, and was soon joined by her son. Here Gray wrote his first English poems, the *Ode to Spring*, the *Eton College* ode, and the beginnings of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, the latter probably suggested by the churchyard near his new home in Stoke Pogis. During the winter of this same year, 1742, he returned to Cambridge, took the degree of Bachelor of Civil Law, and settled down to a dreamy life of study in the libraries of the university, varied only by vacation visits to his mother, and occasional trips abroad. In 1747 his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* was published, but it met with little favor. The *Elegy*, on which he had been working at intervals since 1742, appeared in 1750. Three years later his mother died, and he became more than ever the solitary recluse of the Cambridge libraries.

1754–1771. — From 1754 to 1757 Gray produced some few short poems, among them his well-known Pindaric Odes (see INTRODUCTION). In 1757 he was offered the laureateship, an honor which he refused. Not long after this he began to write translations and imitations of the poetry of the Celts and the Norsemen, — translations which had a decided influence in the development of the new Romantic movement. The remaining years of his life were even more uneventful than those which had preceded. In 1768 he was given the professorship of Modern History and Modern Languages at Cambridge, but he never delivered a lecture. In 1771 the "shy, sensitive, secluded scholar" died, and was buried beside his mother in the "country churchyard" of Stoke Pogis.

According to Gray's own statement, he aimed at a style with "extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical." In this he has succeeded so admirably that almost any one of his few poems is well worth the reader's acquaintance. On the whole, the most enjoyable are probably his simpler "odes," such as that on *Eton College* and the famous *Elegy* which follows. The romantic quality which these poems show is manifest not merely in the breaking away from the heroic couplet, but in the poet's sympathy with low-born and natural life, simple emotions, and homely scenes.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that, from yonder ivy-mantled tow'r,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bow'r,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bow'd the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn isle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn, or animated bust,
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry sooth the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or wak'd to extasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,
The little Tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their hist'ry in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad: nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies;
Some pious drops the closing eye requires:
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries;
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tales relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his fav'rite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

"The next, with dirges due in sad array,
Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him born. —
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH

Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth,
A youth to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose, 125
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728–1774)

Oliver Goldsmith, if not the greatest, is at least the most versatile and pleasing writer of the eighteenth century. Whether as essay writer or dramatist, poet or novelist, he put his hand to nothing that he did not impress with a certain indefinable charm. Of critical faculty or accurate knowledge, he had almost nothing, nor was he by any means a deep thinker. Yet he was easy, simple, and natural; and, as Irving suggests, he identified himself with his writings in such a way as to make us "love the man at the same time that we admire the author." His style has been well characterized as full of "humanity and grace, of simplicity and picturesque sweetness." His life was a singular mixture of comedy and pathos, and has always been a favorite theme of essayist and biographer. We can give here only the briefest outline.

1728–1752. — Goldsmith was born in 1728, in Pallas, a small Irish village where his father was a poor Protestant clergyman. Two years later the family moved to the village of Lissoy, and here the boy received his early schooling, some reflection of which we find in *The Deserted Village*. At the age of seventeen he entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar, or charity student. He seems to have been shiftless at college, but was finally graduated at the age of twenty-one, the lowest in his class. The next three years he spent ostensibly in preparation for holy orders, but really in idleness.

1752–1759. — Goldsmith's uncle, who had helped him through college, now gave him fifty pounds with which to enter upon the study of law in London; but Oliver proceeded in this career no farther than Dublin, where he gambled away his money in a single night. The uncle again to the rescue, Oliver then tried his hand at medicine, and spent two years at Edinburgh, afterwards two more strolling from university to university on the continent, in pursuit of a warrant to practise. Finally, somewhere in Italy, he succeeded in capturing a medical degree, — at least so he claims, — and he was thereafter "Dr. Goldsmith." We now see Goldsmith, at the age of twenty-eight, back from his travels and trying in every conceivable way to make a living, — as apothecary's assistant, as tutor in a school, and, finally, as hack reviewer for a bookseller. Thus his energies were at last directed into their proper channel, for, incidentally to his hack-work, he succeeded in writing, and getting a

publisher for, his *Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe*. With this naively pretentious essay, about a subject of which he knew next to nothing, his career as an author commenced.

1759–1774. — During the later years of his life, amid any quantity of literary drudgery, — a *History of England*, a *History of Animated Nature*, and the like, — he found time to produce several works which were real literature, — some genial and sprightly essays, two very good poems beside other worthy bits of verse, two comedies which still stir the world with laughter and delight, and an idyllic romance whose charm can never grow old. He was an honored member of the famous literary club of Dr. Johnson and his friends. He earned at times considerable sums of money, but through personal extravagance and reckless generosity he was constantly in debt. Yet he was never so poor but that he would lend his last penny to some Irish relative poorer still. His affectionate and confiding nature, his simple-heartedness and sunny disposition, won and kept for him a host of friends. It is pleasant to contemplate this shy, awkward, pock-marked, improvident Irishman, winning his way to the hearts of London's greatest literary men. He impressed himself upon others not by presumption or by assertive wit, but by a humor which widened sympathy while it wakened laughter. His literary style, like his personality, was irresistible, because its charm was natural. He was in the estimation of his friends, as Dr. Johnson said, "a very great man"; and when he died, in 1774, at the early age of forty-five, the grief of Johnson, Burke, Reynolds, and the rest was very deep and sincere.

The student who takes up the reading of Goldsmith's works will soon find that he has entered upon what is not a task, but a delight. In both verse and prose he is a most important figure in the transition from the later Classical school to the new Romantic of the nineteenth century. *The Traveller* (1764) for reflective poetry, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766) for the story, and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) for the drama, are representative works which all should read. But the most popular of his writings is undoubtedly *The Deserted Village*. It is also the most painstaking and artistic of his poems, and therefore deserves especial attention.

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain;
Where health and plenty cheared the labouring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed:

Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm,
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topt the neighbouring hill,
The hawthorn bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blest the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labour free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round.
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair that simply sought renown
By holding out to tire each other down;
The swain mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's side-long looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove.
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please:
These round thy bowers their chearful influence shed:
These were thy charms — but all these charms are fled.
Sweet smiling village, loveliest of the lawn,
Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And desolation saddens all thy green:
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choaked with sedges, works its weedy way;

Along thy glades, a solitary guest,
The hollow sounding bittern guards its nest;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies,
And tires their ecchoes with unvaried cries:
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the mouldering wall;
And, trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, far away thy children leave the land.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade —
A breath can make them, as a breath has made —
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man:
For him light labour spread her wholesome store,
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health,
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered; trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose,
And every want to opulence allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
These gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green, —
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

Sweet Auburn! parent of the blissful hour,
Thy glades forlorn confess the tyrant's power.
Here, as I take my solitary rounds
Amidst thy tangling walks and ruined grounds,
And, many a year elapsed, return to view
Where once the cottage stood, the hawthorn grew,

Remembrance wakes with all her busy train,
Swells at my breast, and turns the past to pain.
In all my wanderings round this world of care,
In all my griefs — and God has given my share —
I still had hopes, my latest hours to crown,
Amidst these humble bowers to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close,
And keep the flame from wasting by repose:
I still had hopes, for pride attends us still,
Amidst the swains to show my book-learned skill,
Around my fire an evening groupe to draw,
And tell of all I felt, and all I saw;
And, as an hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew,
I still had hopes, my long vexations past,
Here to return — and die at home at last.
O blest retirement, friend to life's decline,
Retreats from care, that never must be mine!
How happy he who crowns, in shades like these,
A youth of labour with an age of ease;
Who quits a world where strong temptations try,
And, since 'tis hard to combat, learns to fly!
For him no wretches, born to work and weep,
Explore the mine, or tempt the dangerous deep;
No surly porter stands in guilty state,
To spurn imploring famine from the gate;
But on he moves to meet his latter end,
Angels around befriending Virtue's friend;
Bends to the grave with unperceived decay,
While resignation gently slopes the way;
And, all his prospects brightening to the last,
His heaven commences ere the world be past.
Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose.
There as I past with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below:
The swain responsive as the milk-maid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,

The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind, —
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail,
No chearful murmurs fluctuate in the gale,
No busy steps the grass-grown foot-way tread,
For all the bloomy flush of life is fled.
All but yon widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry faggot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn;
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year:
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place:
Unpractised he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings but relieved their pain:
The long remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire, and talked the night away,

Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch and shewed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.
Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And e'en his failings leaned to Virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.
Beside the bed where parting life was laid,
And sorrow, guilt, and pain by turns dismayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faultering accents whispered praise.
At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile:
His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest:
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Tho' round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.
Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,

There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view;
I knew him well, and every truant knew:
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind, or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew:
'Twas certain he could write, and cypher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even tho' vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.

But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumphed is forgot.
Near yonder thorn, that lifts its head on high,
Where once the sign-post caught the passing eye,
Low lies that house where nut-brown draughts inspired,
Where grey-beard mirth and smiling toil retired,
Where village statesmen talked with looks profound,
And news much older than their ale went round.
Imagination fondly stoops to trace
The parlour splendours of that festive place:
The white-washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,
The varnished clock that clicked behind the door;
The chest contrived a double debt to pay,
A bed by night, a chest of drawers by day;
The pictures placed for ornament and use,
The twelve good rules, the royal game of goose;

The hearth, except when winter chill'd the day,
With aspen boughs and flowers and fennel gay;
While broken tea-cups, wisely kept for shew,
Ranged o'er the chimney, glistened in a row.
Vain transitory splendours! could not all
Reprieve the tottering mansion from its fall?
Obscure it sinks, nor shall it more impart
An hour's importance to the poor man's heart.
Thither no more the peasant shall repair
To sweet oblivion of his daily care;
No more the farmer's news, the barber's tale,
No more the wood-man's ballad shall prevail;
No more the smith his dusky brow shall clear,
Relax his ponderous strength, and lean to hear;
The host himself no longer shall be found
Careful to see the mantling bliss go round;
Nor the coy maid, half willing to be prest,
Shall kiss the cup to pass it to the rest.
Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
These simple blessings of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art;
Spontaneous joys, where Nature has its play,
The soul adopts, and owns their first born sway,
Lightly they frolic o'er the vacant mind,
Unenvied, unmolested, unconfined.
But the long pomp, the midnight masquerade,
With all the freaks of wanton wealth arrayed, —
In these, ere triflers half their wish obtain,
The toiling pleasure sickens into pain;
And, e'en while fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart distrusting asks if this be joy.
Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen who survey
The rich man's joys encrease, the poor's decay,
Tis yours to judge, how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and an happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;

Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains. This wealth is but a name
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss. The man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied, —
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds,
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds:
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighbouring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green:
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land adorned for pleasure all
In barren splendour feebly waits the fall.

As some fair female, unadorned and plain,
Secure to please while youth confirms her reign,
Slights every borrowed charm that dress supplies,
Nor shares with art the triumph of her eyes;
But when those charms are past, for charms are frail,
When time advances, and when lovers fail,
She then shines forth, sollicitous to bless,
In all the glaring impotence of dress:
Thus fares the land by luxury betrayed;
In nature's simplest charms at first arrayed,
But verging to decline, its splendours rise,
Its vistas strike, its palaces surprize;
While, scourged by famine from the smiling land,
The mournful peasant leads his humble band,
And while he sinks, without one arm to save,
The country blooms — a garden and a grave.

Where then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If to some common's fenceless limits strayed
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.

If to the city sped — what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see those joys the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creature's woe.
Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies the sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.
The dome where pleasure holds her midnight reign
Here, richly deckt, admits the gorgeous train:
Tumultuous grandeur crowds the blazing square,
The rattling chariots clash, the torches glare.
Sure scenes like these no troubles e'er annoy!
Sure these denote one universal joy!
Are these thy serious thoughts? — Ah, turn thine eyes
Where the poor houseless shivering female lies.
She once, perhaps, in village plenty blest,
Has wept at tales of innocence distrest;
Her modest looks the cottage might adorn,
Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn:
Now lost to all, — her friends, her virtue fled, —
Near her betrayer's door she lays her head,
And, pinch'd with cold, and shrinking from the shower,
With heavy heart deplores that luckless hour
When idly first, ambitious of the town,
She left her wheel and robes of country brown.
Do thine, sweet Auburn, — thine, the loveliest train, —
Do thy fair tribes participate her pain?
Even now, perhaps, by cold and hunger led,
At proud men's doors they ask a little bread!
Ah, no! To distant climes, a dreary scene,
Where half the convex world intrudes between,
Through torrid tracts with fainting steps they go,
Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe.
Far different there from all that charm'd before,
The various terrors of that horrid shore;

Those blazing suns that dart a downward ray,
And fiercely shed intolerable day;
Those matted woods, where birds forget to sing,
But silent bats in drowsy clusters cling;
Those poisonous fields with rank luxuriance crowned,
Where the dark scorpion gathers death around;
Where at each step the stranger fears to wake
The rattling terrors of the vengeful snake;
Where crouching tigers wait their hapless prey,
And savage men more murderous still than they;
While oft in whirls the mad tornado flies,
Mingling the ravaged landschape with the skies.
Far different these from every former scene,
The cooling brook, the grassy vested green,
The breezy covert of the warbling grove,
That only sheltered thefts of harmless love.

Good Heaven! what sorrows gloom'd that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewel, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.
The good old sire the first prepared to go
To new found worlds, and wept for others' woe;
But for himself, in conscious virtue brave,
He only wished for worlds beyond the grave.
His lovely daughter, lovelier in her tears,
The fond companion of his helpless years,
Silent went next, neglectful of her charms,
And left a lover's for a father's arms.
With louder plaints the mother spoke her woes,
And blest the cot where every pleasure rose,
And kist her thoughtless babes with many a tear,
And claspt them close, in sorrow doubly dear;
Whilst her fond husband strove to lend relief
In all the silent manliness of grief.

O luxury! thou curst by Heaven's decree,
How ill exchanged are things like these for thee!
How do thy potions, with insidious joy,
Diffuse their pleasure only to destroy!
Kingdoms by thee, to sickly greatness grown,
Boast of a florid vigour not their own.
At every draught more large and large they grow,
A bloated mass of rank unwieldy woe;
Till sapped their strength, and every part unsound,
Down, down they sink, and spread a ruin round.
Even now the devastation is begun,
And half the business of destruction done;
Even now, methinks, as pondering here I stand,
I see the rural virtues leave the land.
Down where yon anchoring vessel spreads the sail,
That idly waiting flaps with every gale,
Downward they move, a melancholy band,
Pass from the shore, and darken all the strand.
Contented toil, and hospitable care,
And kind connubial tenderness, are there;
And piety with wishes placed above,
And steady loyalty, and faithful love.
And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade;
Unfit in these degenerate times of shame
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame;
Dear charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride;
Thou source of all my bliss, and all my woe,
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so;
Thou guide by which the nobler arts excel,
Thou nurse of every virtue, fare thee well!
Farewell, and O! where'er thy voice be tried,
On Torno's cliffs, or Pambamarca's side,
Whether where equinoctial fervours glow,
Or winter wraps the polar world in snow,
Still let thy voice, prevailing over time,
Redress the rigours of the inclement clime;

Aid slighted truth with thy persuasive strain;
Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possest,
Tho' very poor, may still be very blest;
That trade's proud empire hastes to swift decay,
As ocean sweeps the laboured mole away;
While self-dependent power can time defy,
As rocks resist the billows and the sky.

ROBERT BURNS (1759–1796)

The greatest poet of Scotland, the most original of the eighteenth-century poets of Great Britain, one of the best song writers of the world, — these are epithets not too extravagant to apply to Robert Burns. Born to a most humble life, a poor country ploughboy, without the advantages of education or of training in his art, he has nevertheless succeeded beyond all but a few in touching the heart of mankind. He was born to be the poet of lyrical passion, to sing the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the loves and yearnings and ambitions of the homely human nature which he knew and so well understood. Except in one or two poems his aim is not action or dramatic intensity; and he displays little of the reflective quality and sustained imagination that also characterize the highest order of poets. He felt rather than thought; he sang rather than philosophized.

Tender and sympathetic toward all living things, he has a message for our hearts from the heart of Nature. Generous and impulsive, he carries us with him in his recital of experiences whether imaginary or real. And in Burns the experience is usually real. With a gay and lively humor he lends such zest to rural scenes, the Fair, the mirth of Hallowe'en, the pleasures of the village inn that, like his simple heroes, we live it all again. When once Burns had sung, no singer could be artificial and succeed. By the warmth of his lyrics he thawed "the eighteenth-century frost" of Pope and his followers. By his dialect poems he turned the broad, provincial Ayrshire into a national and literary tongue. Still, at the best, his was only a half life, with possibilities half realized. The early years were a struggle with harsh necessity; the later, a struggle with dissipation and despair. Had his will power been as strong as his passions were deep, and his life as pure as his ideals high, it is impossible to surmise how successful both in life and letters he might have been. For his nature was at bottom both sensitive and reverent; his religious feeling deep and sincere. Despite its blemishes and notwithstanding his own imperfections, —

perhaps, after all because of the passion of them, — his poetry stands out honest, manly, and inspiring.

1759–1786. — Burns was born in a small clay-built cottage on a little farm two miles south of the Scottish town of Ayr, and close to the old Alloway Kirk of his Tam o' Shanter. His father was an intelligent, God-fearing man, but very poor; and the lad's education was necessarily of the most fragmentary character. From his fourteenth to his twenty-fourth year, young Burns worked hard as the principal laborer on his father's farm. All this time, however, he was a great reader, devouring, among other things, the *Spectator*, Shakespeare, Pope, and the ballads of Scotland. These Scottish ballads seem early to have aroused a spirit of artistic emulation, and we soon hear of the young poet, as he guides his plough, fitting words of his own to ancient Scottish tunes. When about twenty-three years of age he went to a neighboring town to learn the trade of flax-dressing; and here were sown the seeds of the evil habits which did so much to ruin his later life. In 1784 his father died; and, with his brother, Robert rented a farm at Mossgiel, where many of his best poems were written, among others *The Cotter's Saturday Night*. But the farm proved a failure; and the poet, wearied with that kind of life, and harassed by the consequences of his youthful follies, laid plans for emigrating to the West Indies. To secure money for the expenses of this voyage, he published, in 1786, a small volume of *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*. The result was entirely unexpected. Scotland was taken by storm; and the poet was induced to pay a visit to Edinburgh, where he became the literary and social lion of the day.

1786–1796. — Burns spent a winter at Edinburgh, partly in the cultivated circles of that great literary centre; partly with rough and drunken companions at the taverns and social clubs of the city. With the proceeds of a second edition of his poems he took the lease of a farm at Ellisland in southern Scotland. Then he married Jean Armour, the most permanent of his many loves. This, the period in which *Tam o' Shanter* was written, was the happiest of his life; but it was a period of very brief duration. In 1789 he secured a position as exciseman, that is, inspector of liquors and other goods liable to an internal revenue tax. His habits of intemperance were now becoming constantly worse, and from the day, in 1791, when he finally abandoned his farm for a residence in the neighboring town of Dumfries, his downfall was rapid. It is true that during periods of remorse and temporary reform he still continued to write immortal songs; but his health had been shattered, and his spirits were broken. At last, in July, 1796, when only thirty-seven years old, the poet died.

The Cotter's Saturday Night and *Tam o' Shanter* are probably the best, as they are certainly the most famous, of Burns's longer poems. *The Twa Dogs* and *The Brigs of Ayr* are replete with humor and keen observation. The little poems, *To a Mountain Daisy* and *To a Mouse*, exquisitely express the poet's feeling for nature. But the best of his writings are unquestionably the songs.[1] such as *Bonnie Doon*, *Highland Mary*, *Flow Gently Sweet Afton*, *A Red Red Rose*, *Is there for Honest Poverty*, *Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled*, and scores upon scores of others. It should be noted that, save a few stanzas of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*, all the poems mentioned above are in the Scottish dialect. Indeed, when the poet abandons his native dialect for literary English, he is frequently neither better nor worse than dozens of minor poets of the eighteenth century. But the student who wishes to read Burns need not fear the dialect; for mere reading purposes, it is as easily mastered as it is charming in its effects.

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

INSCRIBED TO ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ., OF AYR

"*Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,*
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor." — GRAY.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays;
With honest pride, I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple Scottish lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aiken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sugh;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:

[1] See any collection of his works, or Gayley and Flaherty's *Poetry of the People.*

The toil-worn Cotter frae his labour goes,—
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the morn in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant wee-things, toddlin, stacher thro'
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee.
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thrifty wifie's smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
An' makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

Belyve, the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun';
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town:
Their eldest hope, their Jenny, woman-grown,
In youthfu' bloom,—love sparkling in her e'e—
Comes hame, perhaps to shew a braw new gown,
Or déposite her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The mother, wi' her needle an' her sheers,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The father mixes a' wi' admonition due.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;

An' mind their labors wi' an eydent hand,
An' ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play;
"An' O! be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!"

But, hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, an' convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in Jenny's e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck, anxious care, inquires his name,
While Jenny hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

Wi' kindly welcome, Jenny brings him ben;
A strappan youth, he takes the mother's eye;
Blythe Jenny sees the visit's no ill-ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye.
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi' joy,
But, blate an' laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave,
Weel-pleas'd to think her bairn's respected like the lave.

O, happy love! where love like this is found!
O, heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've pacèd much this weary, mortal round,
And sage experience bids me this declare:—
"If Heaven a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale."

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart,
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet Jenny's unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience, all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child?
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome parritch, chief o' Scotia's food;
The soupe their only hawkie does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck, fell;
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid:
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin and bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim:
Perhaps "Dundee's" wild-warbling measures rise,
Or plaintive "Martyrs," worthy of the name;
Or noble "Elgin" beets the heaven-ward flame,
The sweetest far of Scotia's holy lays:
Compar'd with these, Italian trills are tame;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;
Or how the royal bard did groaning lie
Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme:
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heaven the second name,
Had not on earth whereon to lay His head;
How His first followers and servants sped;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a land;
How he, who lone in Patmos banishèd,
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand,
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounc'd by Heaven's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heaven's Eternal King,
The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
That thus they all shall meet in future days;
There, ever bask in uncreated rays,
No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling Time moves round in an eternal sphere.

Compar'd with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method and of art,
When men display to congregations wide
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the heart!
The Power, incens'd, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,

May hear, well pleas'd, the language of the soul;
And in His Book of Life the inmates poor enroll.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest:
The parent-pair their secret homage pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That He, who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way His wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide;
But chiefly, in their hearts with grace divine preside.

From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs,
That makes her lov'd at home, rever'd abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of God;"
And certes, in fair virtue's heavenly road,
The cottage leaves the palace far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp? a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refin'd!

O Scotia! my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heaven their simple lives prevent
From luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er crowns and coronets be rent,
A virtuous populace may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-lov'd isle.

O Thou! who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' Wallace's undaunted heart;
Who dar'd to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's God, peculiarly Thou art,

His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward !)
Oh never, never, Scotia's realm desert,
But still the patriot and the patriot-bard
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard !

TAM O' SHANTER

A TALE

" Of Brownyis and of Bogillis full is this Buke."
— GAWIN DOUGLAS

WHEN chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,
As market days are wearing late,
And folk begin to tak the gate ;
While we sit bousin at the nappy,
An' gettin fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam o' Shanter,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter :
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonie lasses).

O Tam ! had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice !
She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum ;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou wasna sober ;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller ;

That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on
The smith and thee gat roarin fou on;
That at the Lord's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesied that, late or soon,
Thou wad be found deep drown'd in Doon,
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: — Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnie,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favours secret, sweet, and precious:
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam didna mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himsel' amang the nappy:
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow-fall in the river,
A moment white — then melts forever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form,
Evanishing amid the storm. —
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride, —
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling show'rs rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang the thunder bellow'd:
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel-mounted on his gray mear, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet,
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet,
Whiles glow'rin round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares:
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Where ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murder'd bairn;

And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Where Mungo's mither hang'd hersel'. —
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae, we'll face the devil!
The swats sae ream'd in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he car'd na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventur'd forward on the light;
And, wow! Tam saw an unco sight!

Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion, brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge;
He screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl. —
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip sleight
Each in its cauld hand held a light, —
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,

A murderer's banes, in gibbet-airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
A thief, new-cutted frae the rape, —
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son of life bereft, —
The gray-hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu',
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
Lowping an' flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kennt what was what fu' brawlie;
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
Lang after kenn'd on Carrick shore;
(For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country-side in fear);
Her cutty-sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude tho' sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie. —
Ah! little ken'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee Nannie,
Wi' twa pund Scots ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance o' witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour,—
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd:
Even Satan glowr'd and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark:
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' mony an eldritch skriech and hollow.

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam! thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane o' the brig:
There, at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross!
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie prest,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—

Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man, and mother's son, take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks rin in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys o'er dear;
Remember Tam o'Shanter's mear.

CHAPTER VII

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1. THE NEW ROMANTIC POETRY

THE new movement, though it had gained increasing force during the eighteenth century, was, to some extent, unconscious of its own aims, or, rather, unconscious of any conflict between itself and the older school. Up to the last decade of the century, poets like Cowper and Crabbe failed to realize that the spirit of their verse had broken entirely with the spirit of the verse of the earlier conventionalists. But with the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 the new movement at last came to an understanding, a realization, of its significance and aim; and the triumph of Romantic poetry was complete. In that little book WORDSWORTH and COLERIDGE presented by the example of their poems a protest against the artificiality of Pope and his tribe. They raised a new standard for themselves and for those who were to follow.

It must not be supposed that the Romantic revolution was accomplished in a day. Not only had it been preparing for nearly a hundred years: even when it arrived, its effects were so gradual as to be recognized at first by few. Other forms than the heroic couplet were more and more frequently adopted; diction became simpler, feeling more spontaneous, images more natural. A new and larger range of poetic subjects was eagerly sought and found. An indifference arose to canons of criticism hitherto held sacred. In the Classical school authority had reigned; now individuality became the watchword. Whatever men felt they wrote, and they wrote to please themselves and their readers. As a consequence, instead of the one traditional, universally approved style, artificial, because the conditions that produced it and the spirit that moved it were dead, as many styles arose as there were authors. And as a result there was now ushered in an activity of poetic creation second only to that of the Elizabethan age.

We have said that the *Lyrical Ballads* of Coleridge and Wordsworth marked the culmination of this Romantic movement, but that the far-reaching effects of the change were not realized at once. On the appearance of Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, however, in 1805, the

charms of the new kind of poetry became apparent to everybody. It is undoubtedly true that the fame of SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771–1832) as a poet is overshadowed by the success of his inimitable prose. Yet, historically, too much cannot be made of the fact that the extreme popularity of his metrical romances did more to turn — and speedily turn — the public taste in favor of the new poetry than any of the far more artistic verse of Wordsworth or Coleridge, Shelley or Keats. As a matter of fact, some of Scott's poetry reaches a very high level, according to the canons of its kind; and if his work is uneven in its excellence and some of it rather commonplace, the same is no less true of Coleridge's and of Wordsworth's. The important thing for us to remember just here is that these three, — Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott, — at the beginning of the nineteenth century finally established a kind of poetry which, in one form or another, has since their time held sway.

Scott was not a poet of the highest order, creative and interpretative in one. He described a vivid scene, told a good tale, and so stirred the fancy and the heart. He never presents the spectacle of his own emotion; he rarely rises in his verse, though often in his novels, to the heights of ideal creation. He reproduces for us the picture of a whole-souled muscular Christianity. He is a representative poet of a very high order. He should certainly be included in a volume of this kind; that *The Lady of the Lake* or the *Lay* does not appear here is due entirely to lack of space.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770–1850)

It is doubtless true that no other great English poet is so uneven in the quality of his productions as Wordsworth. Of the many hundreds of pages which he has written, perhaps scarcely more than a hundred can be regarded as poetry of the highest type. Yet that hundred is enough to insure his permanent esteem. Critics have, from his earliest appearance widely diverged in their judgment of his rank; but they are nowadays coming more and more to agree that he deserves to be placed, not indeed with Shakespeare and Milton, but with those who are either great creators or great seers, yet not both at once. He was an interpreter of life, as Chaucer and Spenser were creators of its living semblance. The marked inequality of his work was due very largely to his attempts to carry out his own famous "Theory of Poetry" as published in the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800. Two of his dogmas were: that poetic material may fitly be drawn from themes connected with the common life of the poor and lowly; and that the language of poetry, that is to say, its words and its diction, should be

selected from the language actually used by men. The first of these theories, although at the opposite pole from the teaching of Pope and other eighteenth-century poets of manners, was really not new, in view of the fact that Gray and Goldsmith, and particularly Crabbe and Burns, had already turned for their subjects to the everyday life of the common people. But the second thesis was new, and was the rock on which both the theory and the practice of Wordsworth were nearly wrecked. His critics thought that he desired to limit poetry to the mean and vulgar speech of ignorant people, and they consequently derided his doctrine. But this was not what he had intended to teach. He was leading a revolt against the artificial and pompous diction of the Classical school, and was attempting to show that a "proper selection" from the language of common life would admit of such elevation of style and such figurative expression as naturally attend any passionate utterance, while it would by no means displease or disgust the reader by its familiarity. The theory is right as a protest against unnatural or inflated diction; it is wrong only because it tries to limit poetry to a diction of any restricted kind. And when Wordsworth attempts to exemplify his doctrine he only too frequently sinks into a style which, while versified, was both prosaic and inane. He is, on the other hand, at his best when his poems show the widest possible departure from both of the theories mentioned above.

Wordsworth was particularly the poet of reflection and philosophic thought. He had no humor nor dramatic power, and little passion or narrative skill. Yet his spiritual earnestness and sincerity are such that we are constantly reminded in his poems of his own definition of poetry, "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling." At his best he shows a union of the deepest feeling and the profoundest thought. Unlike Milton and Gray and Tennyson and Arnold, he was not primarily a scholar of books. The woods, the fields, and his rustic neighbors were his best library. His love for Nature was probably truer and more tender than that of any other English poet, before or since. He conceived of her as a living Being, and his love for her was something personal. In his musings on the harmony between this spirit of Nature and the mind of man, he was led from his sympathy with the former to a tender fellow-feeling for the latter. Added to his wonderful insight into natural life was a love of liberty and a trust in God which make his best works seem hardly less than inspired. During his early and best years the critics attacked him with a fierceness which no other great poet, save perhaps Keats, has ever aroused. Still the poet's confidence in himself and in his own ultimate success was unwavering. His aim was to lead men back from the empty conventionalities of the former age to a simple, natural conception of existence in close touch

with Nature and with Nature's God. As a teacher of this kind his influence was great, and his greatness unquestionable. The eighty years of his life were singularly uneventful, and may be indicated in a very few words.

1770–1798. — Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, April, 1770. His early education was received in Lancashire. He was graduated from Cambridge at the age of twenty-one without having distinguished himself in any way. On leaving college he spent a short time in France, where he was much tempted to participate in the French Revolution. He finally settled down with his sister Dorothy in Somersetshire, and there came under the influence and inspiration of his friend Coleridge. This intimacy resulted, in 1798, in the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads*, mainly the work of Wordsworth, yet containing as Coleridge's contribution the immortal *Ancient Mariner*.

1798–1850. — The winter after the appearance of the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and his sister, in company with Coleridge, made a visit to Germany. Returning after a few months, the Wordsworths went back to their beloved northern country, settling first at Grasmere and then at Rydal Mount, among the lakes of Westmoreland. The *Lyrical Ballads* were republished in 1800 and again in 1802. This latter year was also the date of the poet's marriage to Mary Hutchinson, a cousin. In this quiet spot, with wife and sister, and surrounded by Coleridge, Southey, De Quincey, Dr. Arnold, and other friends, he spent in "plain living and high thinking" the quiet remainder of his life. His most important poems were written during the earlier part of this period. The *Ode to Duty* appeared in 1805; *The Prelude* was completed the same year; the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, one year later. *Laodamia* and the *Excursion* were produced in 1814. Other volumes followed at intervals, though little actual writing was done after the poet's sixty-fifth year. On the death of Southey, in 1843, Wordsworth was made Poet Laureate. Before this time his works had succeeded in winning the appreciation of which their author was always calmly confident. His life came to an end in April, 1850, when he was just eighty years old.

The poems which are given below are, perhaps, Wordsworth's finest. They are, as the student will readily perceive, very far from conforming to any narrow theory of poetry. The *Tintern Abbey* lines formed a part of the *Lyrical Ballads*; the two *Odes* have been already mentioned. In justice to his complete poetic career, some, also, of the poems should be read that were written in accordance with his earlier creed. Among the best and sweetest of these are *Expostulation and Reply*, *The Tables Turned*, *Michael*, and the poems on *Lucy*. Few more beautiful lyrics have been written than *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* and *She*

was a Phantom of Delight. His longer poems, though sometimes tedious, such as the *Excursion* and the *Prelude*, contain many passages of rare power and beauty. As a writer of sonnets, Wordsworth's rank is very high. Saintsbury says of these that, with the exception of the *Tintern Abbey* and the *Ode on Immortality*, they contain almost his best work; and that the finest of them are characterized by a "stately magnificence" surpassed by no other poet — not even Milton.

LINES

COMPOSED A FEW MILES ABOVE TINTERN ABBEY, ON REVISITING THE BANKS OF THE WYE DURING A TOUR, JULY 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. — Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild; these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some hermit's cave, where by his fire
The hermit sits alone.
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din

Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration: — feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened: — that serene and blessèd mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on, —
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul;
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.
If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft —
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart —
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! Thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought,
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:

While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads, than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For Nature then
(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all. — I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. — That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn, nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear, — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.
Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou, my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free

To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief,
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance —
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence — wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love — oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor will thou then forget,
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

ODE

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

I

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore; —
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

II

The Rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the Rose,
The Moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare,
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath past away a glory from the earth.

III

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound,
To me alone there came a thought of grief;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong:
The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay;
Land and sea
Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every Beast keep holiday;—
Thou Child of Joy,
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

IV

Ye blessèd Creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make; I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss, I feel — I feel it all.

Oh evil day! if I were sullen
While Earth herself is adorning,
This sweet May-morning,
And the Children are culling
On every side,
In a thousand valleys far and wide,
Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,
And the Babe leaps up on his Mother's arm: —
I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!
— But there's a Tree, of many, one,
A single Field which I have look'd upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone;
The Pansy at my feet
Doth the same tale repeat:
Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

V

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

VI

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;
Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,
And, even with something of a Mother's mind,
And no unworthy aim,
The homely Nurse doth all she can
To make her Foster-child, her Inmate Man,
Forget the glories he hath known,
And that imperial palace whence he came.

VII

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' Darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his Mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his Father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
A wedding or a festival,
A mourning or a funeral;
And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
But it will not be long
Ere this be thrown aside,
And with new joy and pride
The little Actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
As if his whole vocation
Were endless imitation.

VIII

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
Thy Soul's immensity;

Thou best Philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou Eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted forever by the eternal mind, —
Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality
Broods like the Day, a Master o'er a Slave,
A Presence which is not to be put by;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy Soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

IX

O joy! that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest —
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of Childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast: —
Not for these I raise
The song of thanks and praise;
But for those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us, vanishings;
Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realised,

High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty Thing surprised:
But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake
To perish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the Children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

X

Then sing, ye Birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young Lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;
In the primal sympathy

Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

XI

And O, ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills, and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the Brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The Clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober colouring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

ODE TO DUTY

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,

Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Hearts! without reproach or blot,
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust:
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly, if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:

Flowers laugh before thee on their beds,
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are fresh and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice;
The confidence of reason give;
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

SONNETS

LONDON, 1802 [TO MILTON]

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 3, 1802

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:

This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendour, valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

"IT IS A BEAUTEOUS EVENING, CALM AND FREE"

It is a beauteous evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven broods o'er Sea.
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine.
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

"THE WORLD IS TOO MUCH WITH US"

The world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;

It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

"SCORN NOT THE SONNET"

Scorn not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned,
Mindless of its just honours; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow; a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and, when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet, whence he blew
Soul-animating strains — alas, too few!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772–1834)

Of all the poets who helped to usher in the Romantic movement, none was more original and brilliant than Coleridge. Possessed of a magnetic presence, a penetrating mind, a profound spiritual insight, and a wonderful influence over most of those with whom he came into contact, he had a native genius which ought to have placed him among the first of English authors. But, as Carlyle well expresses it, "To the man himself Nature had given, in high measure, the seeds of a noble endowment; and to unfold it had been forbidden him." For of all figures in our English pantheon of poets, none has been so weak of will, so destitute of executive force, so incapable of sustained effort, as this great dreamer. The early part of his life was filled with vague plans for social revolution; the last with a constant struggle against a craving for opium.

His work was fragmentary to a singular degree. Much of his poetry is unworthy of his capabilities. As a matter of fact, nine-tenths of what

he did write has very properly been forgotten. But the part that *is* good, most of it written during a single twelve-month when the poet was twenty-five years old, is marvellous, ranking with the best in English poetry. The imagery, the metre, the felicity of phrase, the novelty, the suggestiveness, the splendid creative inspiration, are of the highest, the inevitable order. But Coleridge was not gifted with poetic faculties alone. Critic, philosopher, theologian, journalist, lecturer, sparkling conversationist, — he was all these, but all marred by the fatal flaw. Carry into action his splendid theories, or bring to a completion his brilliant designs, he could not. Yet, in spite of his frailties, he must be remembered as one of the most potent agencies in revolutionizing the English taste for literature and in changing the current of English critical and philosophical thought. He had the gift of firing others to do what he could not do himself. Wordsworth, Southey, Lamb, Hazlitt, Scott — all have acknowledged their great debt to the inspiration received from Coleridge.

1772–1804. — Coleridge was born at the village of Ottery St. Mary in Devonshire, October, 1772. His father, a clergyman and schoolmaster, died when the boy was only eight years old. Two years later he entered Christ's Hospital, a free school in London, where he was a schoolmate of that most delightful of essayists, Charles Lamb. At the age of nineteen he was enrolled at Jesus College, Cambridge, but left three years later without taking a degree. About this time he met the poet Southey, then a student at Oxford, and the two young men formed wild schemes of a socialist colony in America, — an undertaking which was subsequently given up for lack of funds. In 1795 Coleridge and Southey married sisters, and the former at length settled down in Somersetshire, where he became intimate with Wordsworth and united with him in writing the *Lyrical Ballads*. To this year, 1797–1798, belong *The Ancient Mariner* and the first part of *Christabel;* also *Kubla Khan*, a short and very beautiful fragment, composed (its author asserts) in a dream. Though he had written some verse before he met Wordsworth, this was the high-water mark of Coleridge's poetry. The next year, with Wordsworth and his sister, Coleridge went to Germany, where he learned the language, became interested in German philosophy, and began to translate Schiller's *Wallenstein*. In 1801, at the age of twenty-eight, he made his home in the Lake district near Wordsworth and Southey. Here, just as life was opening her richest possibilities, he unfortunately took for an attack of rheumatism a quack medicine containing opium. The opium habit was henceforward to be his curse.

1804–1834. — Abandoning his family to the care of Southey, Cole-

ridge spent the next dozen years in roaming hither and thither, in England or on the continent, writing, lecturing, dreaming, fighting his terrible habit. In these years his writing was mostly of the critical kind. In 1816, at the age of forty-four, he placed himself in the family of a London physician, who undertook to help him overcome his appetite for opium. That year proved to be a second period of activity: it witnessed the production of the *Biographia Literaria*, his most notable prose work. The rest of his life was spent at the home of this good Mr. Gillman. Though unproductive of much published work, this was nevertheless a season of great influence and inspiration for the many "young, inquiring men," who were wont to gather around the oracle to listen to his wonderful and prophetic utterances concerning problems of philosophy and theology. Coleridge died in July, 1834.

His best poems are undoubtedly those which were written during his early manhood, while he was enjoying the companionship of Wordsworth. *Kubla Khan* and *Christabel*, while in certain passages of an almost unearthly beauty, are after all only fragments. But the ballad of *Love*, the *Hymn before Sunrise*, and the ode on *France* are both highly poetical and complete. His masterpiece, *The Ancient Mariner*, in its combination of mystery and sublimity, of marvellous descriptive power and half-hidden spiritual truth, stands undoubtedly first of the consciously artistic ballads of English literature.

THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER

IN SEVEN PARTS

Argument

How a Ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold Country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical Latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the Ancyent Marinere came back to his own Country.

Part I

An ancient Mariner meeteth three Gallants bidden to a wedding-feast, and detaineth one.

It is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?

"The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest is spell-bound by the eye of the old seafaring man, and constrained to hear his tale.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

"The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

The Mariner tells how the ship sailed southward with a good wind and fair weather, till it reached the line.

"Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"
The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she;
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest heareth the bridal music; but the Mariner continueth his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

The ship driven by a storm toward the south pole.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

"With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

"And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

The land of ice, and of fearful sounds where no living thing was to be seen.

"And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken —
The ice was all between.

"The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great sea-bird, called the Albatross, came through the snow-fog, and was received with great joy and hospitality.

"At length did cross an Albatross,
Thorough the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

"It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.

The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

"And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And lo! the Albatross proveth a bird of good omen, and followeth the ship as it returned northward through fog and floating ice.

"In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
Glimmered the white moon-shine."

"God save thee, ancient Mariner!
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!—
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-bow
I shot the Albatross.

The ancient Mariner inhospitably killeth the pious bird of good omen.

Part II

"The Sun now rose upon the right;
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

"And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

"And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred, I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
'Ah wretch!' said they, 'the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!'

His shipmates cry out against the ancient Mariner, for killing the bird of good luck.

"Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:

But when the fog cleared off, they justify the

same, and thus make themselves accomplices in the crime.

Then all averred, I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right,' said they, 'such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.'

The fair breeze continues; the ship enters the Pacific Ocean, and sails northward, even till it reaches the line.

"The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

The ship hath been suddenly becalmed.

"Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

"All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

"Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Albatross begins to be avenged.

"Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink.

"The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

"About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green, and blue, and white.

"And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A spirit had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels; concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

"And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root;
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

"Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

PART III

The shipmates, in their sore distress, would fain throw the whole guilt on the ancient Mariner: in sign whereof they hang the dead sea-bird round his neck.

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye,
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient Mariner beholdeth a sign in the element afar off.

"At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

"A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer approach, it seemeth him to be a ship; and at a dear ransom he freeth his speech from the bonds of thirst.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, 'A sail! a sail!'

A flash of joy.

"With throats unslaked, with black lips baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror follows; for can it be a ship that comes onward without wind or tide?

"'See! see!' (I cried) 'she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal;
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!'

"The western wave was all a-flame,
The day was well-nigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth him but the skeleton of a ship.

"And straight the Sun was flecked with bars,
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!)
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

"'Alas!' (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
'How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the sun,
Like restless gossameres?

And its ribs are seen as bars on the face of the setting Sun. The Spectre-Woman and her death-mate, and no other on board the skeleton ship. Like vessel, like crew!

"'Are those her ribs through which the sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that woman's mate?'

"Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Night-mare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

"The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice;
'The game is done! I've won! I've won!'
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

Death and Life-in-Death have diced for the ship's crew, and she (the latter) winneth the ancient Mariner.

"The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out;
At one stride comes the dark;
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

No twilight within the courts of the Sun.

"We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed white
From the sails the dew did drip —
Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

At the rising of the Moon,

"One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

one after another,

"Four times fifty living men,
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan)
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down oñe by one.

his shipmates drop down dead.

"The souls did from their bodies fly, —
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by,
Like the whizz of my cross-bow!"

But Life-in-Death begins her work on the ancient Mariner.

Part IV

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank, and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand.

The Wedding-Guest feareth that a spirit is talking to him;

but the ancient Mariner assureth him of his bodily life, and proceedeth to relate his horrible penance.

"I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand, so brown." —
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

He despiseth the creatures of the calm,

"The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

and envieth that they should live, and so many lie dead.

"I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away;
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

"I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

"I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

But the curse liveth for him in the eye of the dead men.

"The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

"An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;

But oh! more horrible than that
Is a curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

"The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside —

"Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmèd water burnt alway
A still and awful red.

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

"Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

"O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

"The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

In his loneliness and fixedness he yearneth towards the journeying Moon, and the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

By the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm

Their beauty and their happiness.

He blesseth them in his heart.

The spell begins to break.

Part V

"Oh sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from heaven,
That slid into my soul.

By grace of the holy Mother, the ancient Mariner is refreshed with rain.

"The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

"My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

"I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light — almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessèd ghost.

He heareth sounds and seeth strange sights and commotions in the sky and the element.

"And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

"The upper air burst into life!
And a hundred fire-flags sheen,
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

"And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

"The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side:
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

"The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

The bodies of the ship's crew are inspirited, and the ship moves on;

"They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

"The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

"The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope
But he said nought to me.—"

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest!
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:

but not by the souls of the men, nor by dæmons of earth or middle air, but by a blessed troop of angelic spirits, sent down by the invocation of the guardian saint.

"For when it dawned—they dropped their arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

"Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

"Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the sky-lark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

"And now 'twas like all instruments,
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the heavens be mute.

"It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

"Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome Spirit from the south pole carries on the ship as far as the line, in obedience to the angelic troop, but still requireth vengeance.

"Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The spirit slid; and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

"The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,

With a short uneasy motion —
Backwards and forwards half her length,
With a short uneasy motion.

"Then, like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound:
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swound.

"How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned,
Two voices in the air.

"'Is it he?' quoth one, 'Is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

"'The spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

"The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

The Polar Spirit's fellow-dæmons, the invisible inhabitants of the element, take part in his wrong; and two of them relate, one to the other, that penance long and heavy for the ancient Mariner hath been accorded to the Polar Spirit, who returneth southward.

Part VI

First Voice

"'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing —
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the ocean doing?'

Second Voice

"'Still as a slave before his lord,
The ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

"'If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looketh down on him.'

First Voice

The Mariner hath been cast into a trance; for the angelic power causeth the vessel to drive northward faster than human life could endure.

"'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

"'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

"I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:
'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was high;
The dead men stood together.

"All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

"The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

"And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen —

"Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

"But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

"It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring —
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

"Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze —
On me alone it blew.

"Oh! dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

"We drifted o'er the harbour-bar,
And I with sobs did pray —
'O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep alway.'

"The harbour-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!

The curse is finally expiated.

And the ancient Mariner beholdeth his native country

And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

"The rock shone bright, the kirk no less,
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies,

"And the bay was white with silent light,
Till, rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,

and appear in their own forms of light.

In crimson colours came.

"A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck —
Oh Christ! what saw I there!

"Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand;
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

"This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
No voice did they impart —
No voice; but oh! the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

"But soon I heard the dash of oars;
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

"The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

"I saw a third — I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.
He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

Part VII

The Hermit of the wood

"This Hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

"He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve —
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

"The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

approacheth the ship with wonder.

"'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said —
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

"'Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;

When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

"'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look —'
(The Pilot made reply)
'I am a-feared' — 'Push on, push on!'
Said the Hermit cheerily.

"The boat came closer to the ship,
But I nor spake nor stirred;
The boat came close beneath the ship,
And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

"Under the water it rumbled on,
Still louder and more dread:
It reached the ship, it split the bay;
The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

"Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,
Which sky and ocean smote,
Like one that hath been seven days drowned
My body lay afloat;
But, swift as dreams, myself I found
Within the Pilot's boat.

"Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,
The boat spun round and round;
And all was still, save that the hill
Was telling of the sound.

"I moved my lips — the Pilot shrieked
And fell down in a fit;
The holy Hermit raised his eyes,
And prayed where he did sit.

"I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,
Who now doth crazy go,

Laughed loud and long, and all the while
His eyes went to and fro.
'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see,
The Devil knows how to row.'

"And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

"'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say —
What manner of man art thou?'

The ancient Mariner earnestly entreateth the Hermit to shrieve him; and the penance of life falls on him.

"Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

"Since then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns;
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

And ever and anon throughout his future life an agony constraineth him to travel from land to land,

"I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.

"What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there:
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are:
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

"O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:

So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

"O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!—

"To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes, and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

and to teach, by his own example, love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth.

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man,
He rose the morrow morn.

2. THE POETS OF SOCIAL REVOLT

Since the Romantic revival reached its climax with Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Scott, in the new poetry of the early nineteenth century, the changes of its fashion have been comparatively insignificant; whatever variations of mood and treatment exist are due rather to the dis-

tinctive temperaments of individual poets than to any marked divergence of poetic "tendencies" or "schools." There is, however, sufficient kinship between certain poets of the first quarter of the century to justify the heading of this sketch.

As we have seen, Coleridge and Wordsworth were early attracted by an enthusiasm for the French Revolution and for the spirit of freedom and equality which it seemed to breathe. But these poets were soon turned from their inclination by the violence which accompanied the Revolution, and by a profound disappointment in the results of the struggle. It was reserved for two later writers, BYRON and SHELLEY, to divine and express the poetic significance of this revolutionary spirit. These young men were poets of brilliant genius and of independent spirit. Both were devoted lovers of liberty, and both carried their love of liberty so far as to be convinced of the necessity of breaking away from the traditions — and from what they regarded as the unnatural restraints — of organized society. To be sure, their distinctive differences of character were as marked as their points of likeness. Byron was a man of ungoverned passions, animal enthusiasms, tremendous egotism, cynical and, sometimes, pessimistic temperament. Shelley, on the other hand, was averse to sensual indulgence and generous to a fault; he seemed rather a dweller in some ethereal world than a creature of this earth. As a writer, Byron was naturally glorious in rhetoric but hasty and careless in composition; charged with intellectual force, but deficient in imagination and poetic earnestness: while Shelley was a dreamer, imaginative, unpractical, but an exquisite artist, a poet in every fibre. Yet, in spite of these differences in character and art, each was, in his own way, a poet of radicalism or revolt.

GEORGE GORDON BYRON (1788–1824)

Of all English poets none was, from the first, greeted with such unstinted and universal applause as Lord Byron. Unlike Keats or Wordsworth or Browning, whose growth into popular favor was slow, Byron achieved that favor almost at a single leap. As he himself says, after the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, "I awoke to find myself famous." His poems were received abroad even more enthusiastically than at home. Taine, the great French critic, declares that "all styles appear dull beside his," and that "he is so great that from him alone we shall learn more truths of his country than from all the rest combined"; while Goethe, the German poet and critic, has said that the English "can show no poet who is to be compared with him." Byron's influence over the literature of foreign nations has been

very great indeed. His reputation in continental Europe rivalled even that of Shakespeare; and it has, even to the present day, scarcely waned.

Not so in England. Despite his brilliant genius and wonderful poetic ability, Byron's decline in the favor of both English critic and English reader was as sure as his ascent was rapid. Nor are the causes far to seek. Byron was a poet of the Revolution. He caught the spirit of his age in representing the reaction of a new century against cant and hypocrisy in society, religion, and politics. He wrote, moreover, with an assured strength, a spirited abandon, a splendid "sweep and energy" that at first carried all before him. His subjects were pleasing; his lyric and narrative intensity and his reckless humor compelled attention; his fascinating personality shone clear and winsome through every line of his work. And so, when his star arose, his contemporaries were first attracted; then they marvelled, then enthusiastically admired. But he wrote with little artistic finish; and many, especially those at whose social and religious ideals he had jeered, denounced his poetry as lacking in high seriousness, spirituality, comprehension of life, natural and human, reverence for the decent and divine. These charges were not altogether just: his style is rapid, nervous, direct, incisive, and exhilarating; and though his Titanic heroes in their revolt against authority may sometimes be theatrical, sometimes profane, still in *The Prisoner of Chillon* and *Prometheus* he shows a real sympathy for the martyrs of mankind; in the later cantos of *Childe Harold* he sounds the note of patriotism and historic woe; in many a poem, the diapason of nature in her changing moods. Much of his poetry, to be sure, was written for the fashion and the time; that of course fails now of its appeal. His contemporaries of the sober kind found him (and with reason) not infrequently flippant. In his *Don Juan*, which some consider his best and most characteristic work, he seemed even to delight in defying the proprieties. His cynicism is often tedious, and his sincerity sometimes doubtful. So his star has for a season waned. But it is not burnt out; merely eclipsed. As younger and more conventional poets pass from the zenith, and the fashion of radicalism returns, Byron will again be increasingly read and enjoyed. His *Childe Harold* will live as long as the historic sense remains with man; and *Chillon*, *Mazeppa*, *The Prophecy of Dante*, and *Don Juan*, while man is virile, adventurous, freedom-loving, passionate, and heroic.

1788–1812. — George Gordon Byron was born in London, January, 1788, the descendant of one of the oldest houses of English nobility. His father, Captain Byron of the English army, was a man of reckless and dissolute habits; his mother was a haughty, but poorly balanced

woman, worse than no mother in the training of a son. On the death of his great-uncle, the "wicked" Lord Byron, George, when only ten years old, came into the title and estates of the family. Not long after this he went to school at Harrow, and afterward to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he remained about three years. We may imagine him at this time a handsome, high-spirited boy, headstrong, self-willed, passionate. Owing to a deformation of one foot, he was somewhat lame; yet he was athletic and reckless in sports. When nineteen years of age, he issued a collection of verses entitled *Hours of Idleness*. This the *Edinburgh Review* ridiculed in a way so exasperating to the young poet that two years later he published a brilliant satirical reply in verse, which he called *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. This same year, 1809, he took his seat in the House of Lords, and immediately thereafter departed for travel through the countries around the Mediterranean, a journey in which he spent two years.

1812–1816. — Returning to England with the first two cantos of *The Pilgrimage of Childe Harold*, Byron was induced to publish them, and, as a result, achieved unparalleled popularity. The poem itself is characteristic, full of the author's individuality, and based upon impressions of his journey. During the next four years he wrote half a dozen tales in verse, *The Corsair*, *The Siege of Corinth*, etc.; and each new production was hailed with greater delight than that which preceded. In 1815 he married a Miss Milbanke, but the union proved most unhappy, and the couple separated within a year. English society sided with the wife, and Byron now found himself as unpopular as he had before been popular. Hurt and angry, in 1816 he accordingly left England, never to return.

1816–1824. — During this exile his pen was even more active than before. First, he spent several months at Genoa, with Shelley and his wife, and wrote *The Prisoner of Chillon* and the third canto of *Childe Harold*. The next year he went to Venice, where, in the midst of a life of reckless dissipation, he managed to finish his *Manfred* and another canto of *Childe Harold*, and to follow these with *Mazeppa* and the first part of *Don Juan*. We next see him at Ravenna plotting against the Austrian rulers of Italy, then at Pisa with Shelley again, and finally at Genoa. The Greeks were at this time struggling for independence from Turkey, and Byron with characteristic impetuosity threw himself into their cause. Late in 1823 he embarked for Greece, where he was invited to a congress at Salona, which had for its purpose to offer him the crown of Greece. But enfeebled by exposure and disease he was even then upon his death-bed. His life ended at Missolonghi, April 19, 1824, — just as it was beginning to give promise of some practical service to humanity.

Byron is best represented by his longer poems; but these are of such a nature that it is very difficult to make extracts from them which will preserve the flavor of the whole. Of the *Childe Harold*, the strongest canto is undoubtedly the third, which contains some of the poet's best descriptive and reflective stanzas. Indeed, in the third and fourth cantos are to be found passages that deserve to be ranked with the best poetry of the century. *Manfred*, another of his longer poems, is well worthy to be read entire. Some of his shorter lyrics have the ring of inevitable art, — simple, passionate, and beautiful, such as *Fare Thee Well*, *She Walks in Beauty*, *The Isles of Greece*, *Maid of Athens*, and the *Lines on Completing my Thirty-Sixth Year*. *The Prisoner of Chillon*, which is given below, was written at the most fruitful period of his life. It has not the love-interest or the passion for reckless adventure of many of Byron's poems, yet it furnishes a fine example of his powers of description, his simplicity of style, his directness and vigor, and his enthusiasm for liberty of conscience. The *Sonnet on Chillon* was written later when the poet had become acquainted with the story of Bonnivard, an actual "prisoner of Chillon." The few stanzas from *Childe Harold* — we wish they could be more — are added merely to give the student a taste of, and for, that splendid poem.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd — forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race

In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven — who now are one;
  Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
  Proud of Persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd,
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and grey,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
  And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
  For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years — I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three — yet, each alone;

We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,
But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together — yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but join'd in heart,
'Twas still some solace, in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound — not full and free,
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy — but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do — and did my best —
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him, with eyes as blue as heaven —
For him my soul was sorely moved;
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;
For he was beautiful as day —
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free) —
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:

And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy: — but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline —
And so perchance in sooth did mine:
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him his dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave enthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made — and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;

And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loath'd and put away his food;
It was not that 'twas coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunter's fare,
And for the like had little care:
The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captives' tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth? — he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand — nor dead,
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died — and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine — it was a foolish thought,

But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer —
They coldly laugh'd — and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;
His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favorite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired —
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood: —
I've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread;
But these were horrors — this was woe
Unmix'd with such — but sure and slow;
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender — kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;
With all the while a cheek whose bloom

Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray;
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright;
And not a word of murmur — not
A groan o'er his untimely lot, —
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence — lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear —
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonishèd;
I called, and thought I heard a sound —
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him: — I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived — *I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last — the sole — the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.
One on the earth, and one beneath —
My brothers — both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive —
A frantic feeling when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,

I had no earthly hope — but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well — I never knew:
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling — none —
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and grey;
It was not night — it was not day —
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness — without a place;
There were no stars — no earth — no time —
No check — no change — no good — no crime —
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain, —
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor

Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!
I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And, cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in wingèd guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For — Heaven forgive that thought! the while
Which made me both to weep and smile —
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 'twas mortal — well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone, —
Lone — as the corse within its shroud,
Lone — as a solitary cloud,
A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was: — my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child — no sire — no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;
I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more upon the mountains high
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them — and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;

I saw their thousand years of snow
On high — their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;
The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seemed to fly;
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled — and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And, when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save, —
And yet my glance, too much oppress,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count — I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise
And clear them of their dreary mote;

At last men came to set me free;
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where;
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage — and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:
With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill — yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell:
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are: — even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

SONNET ON CHILLON

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart —
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd —
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! Thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar — for 'twas trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,

By Bonnivard! — May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

STANZAS FROM CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

(CANTO IV, LXXVIII–LXXX: ROME)

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, — Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day —
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;
An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride:
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climb'd the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site: —
Chaos of ruins! Who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "Here was, or is," where all is doubly night?

(CANTO IV, CXXXIX–CXLV: THE COLISEUM)

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roared applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday —
All this rush'd with his blood — Shall he expire,
And unavenged? — Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

But here, where murder breathed her bloody steam;
And here, where buzzing nations choked the ways,
And roar'd or murmur'd like a mountain-stream
Dashing or winding as its torrent strays;
Here where the Roman million's blame or praise
Was death or life, the playthings of a crowd,
My voice sounds much — and fall the stars' faint rays

On the arena void — seats crush'd — walls bow'd —
And galleries, where my steps seem echoes strangely loud.

A ruin — yet what ruin! from its mass
Walls, palaces, half-cities, have been rear'd;
Yet oft the enormous skeleton ye pass,
And marvel where the spoil could have appear'd.
Hath it indeed been plunder'd, or but clear'd?
Alas! develop'd, opens the decay,
When the colossal fabric's form is near'd;
It will not bear the brightness of the day,
Which streams too much on all years, man, have reft away.

But when the rising moon begins to climb
Its topmost arch, and gently pauses there;
When the stars twinkle through the loops of time,
And the low night-breeze waves along the air
The garland-forest, which the gray walls wear,
Like laurels on the bald first Cæsar's head;
When the light shines serene but doth not glare,
Then in this magic circle raise the dead:
Heroes have trod this spot — 'tis on their dust ye tread.

"While stands the Coliseum, Rome shall stand;
When falls the Coliseum, Rome shall fall;
And when Rome falls — the World." From our own land
Thus spake the pilgrims o'er this mighty wall
In Saxon times, which we are wont to call
Ancient; and these three mortal things are still
On their foundations, and unalter'd all;
Rome and her Ruin past Redemption's skill,
The World, the same wide den — of thieves, or what ye will.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792–1822)

The quality of Shelley's genius and the peculiarity of his work are such that probably no great English poet lends himself to criticism less easily than he. His poetry is so iridescent, so ethereal, so far removed from the ordinary standards of technique, that it practically defies analysis. Shelley was sensitive, refined, and still fervid, impelled by a

daring independence that accords oddly with his dreamy spiritual nature. From his earliest youth he was a striking figure. Of imagination all compact, innocent at heart, and generous of disposition, he is at the same time unpractical in thought, impatient of restraint, and, from the first, rebellious against constituted authority, at war with existing institutions, a self-elected prophet stirred with the passion of reforming the world. To his mind the church, the state, the social order — all were corrupt, results of tyranny and superstition, and, as such, to be swept aside. Accordingly he denounced the marriage bond, declared himself an atheist, and labored in splendid but nebulous verse to realize his "visions of humanity made perfect"; to build an earthly tabernacle of heavenly liberty and of love and unity among the nations. All this marks the irresponsibility of boyish enthusiasm.

But when we study his poetry for its own sake, we forget the man in our admiration of the poet, for it is poetry such as the world has rarely seen: not philosophical like that of Wordsworth or Browning, nor popular like that of Burns or Tennyson, but suffused with a creative beauty, of a purely poetical quality which has appeared in no other English poet with the exception of Spenser, and, to a lesser degree, of Keats. Its dazzling images, its rapid rhythms, its grace and delicacy of touch, its exquisite melodies and harmonies, win us to forget the quixotic vagaries of the reformer in the perfection of the artist. The last years of Shelley were his best. His excesses of thought and style seemed to be passing under the yoke. His constant reading and study were bringing him into greater sympathy and conformity with the world. Had it not been for his early tragical death, it is difficult to estimate to what heights his poetic genius might have attained; but still his lack of sound sense, his uncertainty of moral balance, must always have alienated from him the confidence of practical men.

1792–1818. — Shelley was born in August, 1792, near Horsham in the county of Sussex. His father, Sir Timothy Shelley, was a typically conservative, practical country squire, never in the least degree able to understand or appreciate his brilliant son. At the age of thirteen the boy was sent to Eton, where he was noted for his impatience of restraint and his independent spirit, as well as for the astonishing ease with which he mastered the classics and other favorite subjects of his course. When eighteen years old he entered Oxford; but his sceptical beliefs, and especially his publication of a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity for Atheism*, brought about his expulsion within a year. From Oxford he went to London, where, about his nineteenth birthday, he met and eloped with a schoolmate of his sisters — a girl three years younger than himself. After his marriage he wandered with his girl-wife through various parts of England, Wales, and Ireland, and during this time composed his first

long (and somewhat crude) poem, *Queen Mab*. Returning to London in 1813, he became intimate with the family of William Godwin, a well-known radical thinker of the time, who doubtless strengthened Shelley in his revolutionary principles. The next year, influenced by his irresponsible views concerning matrimonial obligations, he deserted his young wife, and, on her tragic death two years later, married Mary Godwin for whom he had already formed an attachment. These events naturally estranged the British public from Shelley, who, after the publication of two or three important poems which were somewhat coldly received, finally left England for Italy. This was in 1818, when he was in his twenty-sixth year.

1818–1822. — These were the most important years of Shelley's life. Much of the time was spent in the company of Byron, whom he had previously met on a visit to Switzerland in 1816. Beside many shorter poems, such as the *Skylark*, the *Cloud*, the *Ode to the West Wind*, and the *Ode to Liberty*, he produced, during these years, two great tragedies, *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*. In 1821, the last year of his life, he wrote his *Adonais*, upon the death of Keats — a poem which ranks with Milton's *Lycidas* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, as one of the best elegies in the English language. In July of the next year, 1822, when not yet thirty years of age, Shelley was drowned while sailing in the Gulf of Leghorn. His body was discovered after a few days, and, in accordance with an ancient custom, cremated on the shore where it was found. The ashes were then gathered up and buried beside those of Keats in the little English cemetery at Rome.

Shelley's longer poems are for the most part so obscure and so far beyond and beside the facts and experiences of everyday life that it is very difficult to enter into his world. But many of his lyrics and shorter poems are free from this aloofness and obscurity; and from them the reader will most readily learn the wonderful force of the poet's genius. Of these shorter lyrics the best known are those written during the last years of his life. Though his *Cenci* shows astonishing dramatic power, and his reflective poems great beauty, he excels especially as a poet of the emotional or presentative type.

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Mænad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss, and flowers
So sweet the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods, which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skyey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

TO A SKYLARK

Hail to thee, blithe spirit—
Bird thou never wert—
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest;
Like a cloud of fire
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun.

The pale purple even
Melts around thy flight;
Like a star of heaven
In the broad daylight,
Thou art unseen, — but yet I hear thy shrill delight,

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear,
Until we hardly see — we feel that it is there.

All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud,
As, when Night is bare,
From one lonely cloud
The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflowed.

What thou art we know not;
What is most like thee?
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden
In a palace tower,
Soothing her love-laden
Soul in secret hour
With music sweet as love, — which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew,
Scattering unbeholden
Its aërial hue
Among the flowers and grass which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embowered
In its own green leaves,
By warm winds deflowered,
Till the scent it gives
Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-wingèd thieves:

Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass,
Rain-awakened flowers, —
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, — thy music doth surpass.

Teach us, sprite or bird,
What sweet thoughts are thine:
I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine.

Chorus hymenæal,
Or triumphal chaunt,
Matched with thine, would be all
But an empty vaunt, —
A thing wherein we feel there is some hidden want.

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields or waves or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be:
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest — but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Waking or asleep
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream —
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

We look before and after,
And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought.

Yet if we could scorn
Hate and pride and fear,
If we were things born
Not to shed a tear,
I know not how thy joy we ever should come near.

Better than all measures
Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found,
Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground!

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world should listen then — as I am listening now.

THE CLOUD

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;

And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.
Sublime on the towers of my skyey bowers,
Lightning my pilot sits;
In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
It struggles and howls at fits;
Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
This pilot is guiding me,
Lured by the love of the genii that move
In the depths of the purple sea;
Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills,
Over the lakes and the plains,
Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
The Spirit he loves remains;
And I all the while bask in heaven's blue smile,
Whilst he is dissolving in rains.

The sanguine sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
And his burning plumes outspread,
Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
When the morning star shines dead;
As on the jag of a mountain crag,
Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
An eagle alit one moment may sit
In the light of its golden wings.
And when sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
Its ardors of rest and of love,
And the crimson pall of eve may fall
From the depth of heaven above,
With wings folded I rest, on mine airy nest,
As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden, with white fire laden,
Whom mortals call the Moon,
Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
By the midnight breezes strewn;
And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
Which only the angels hear,

May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer;
And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
Like a swarm of golden bees,
When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the sun's throne with a burning zone,
And the moon's with a girdle of pearl;
The volcanos are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
Over a torrent sea,
Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof, —
The mountains its columns be.
The triumphal arch, through which I march,
With hurricane, fire, and snow,
When the powers of the air are chained to my chair,
Is the million-colored bow;
The sphere-fire above its soft colors wove,
While the moist earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
I change, but I cannot die.
For after the rain, when with never a stain
The pavilion of heaven is bare,
And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
Build up the blue dome of air,
I silently laugh at my own cenotaph, —
And out of the caverns of rain,
Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
I arise and unbuild it again.

TO NIGHT

I

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
Spirit of Night!
Out of the misty eastern cave,
Where, all the long and lone daylight,
Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear,
Which make thee terrible and dear, —
Swift be thy flight!

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
Star-inwrought!
Blind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
Kiss her until she be wearied out:
Then wander o'er city, and sea, and land,
Touching all with thine opiate wand —
Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn,
I sighed for thee;
When light rode high, and the dew was gone,
And noon lay heavy on flower and tree,
And the weary Day turned to his rest,
Lingering like an unloved guest,
I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
"Wouldst thou me?"
Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
Murmured like a noontide bee,
"Shall I nestle at thy side?
Wouldst thou me?" — and I replied,
'No, not thee!"

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
Soon, too soon;
Sleep will come when thou art fled;
Of neither would I ask the boon
I ask of thee, beloved Night, —
Swift be thine approaching flight,
Come soon, soon!

3. A POET OF THE ÆSTHETIC TRANSITION

In not a few histories of English poetry the name of KEATS has been linked with the names of Byron and Shelley. This classification is, however, misleading; for, aside from the shortness of his career, his youthful view of life, and the accidental fact that he was an exact contemporary, Keats has little in common with the other two. It is true that, like Shelley, Keats was a thorough artist, entirely devoted to his art, instinct with imagination and the love of beauty. But whereas Shelley is "something remote and afar," and has, therefore, few followers in the development of English poetry, Keats constitutes a very important factor in that development. Stopford Brooke says of him that he "went back to Spenser and especially to Shakespeare's minor poems to find his inspiration; to Greek and mediæval life to find his subjects, and established, in doing so, that which has been called the *literary poetry* of England." And Saintsbury calls Keats "the forerunner of Tennyson, and through Tennyson, of all English poets since; the father of every English poet born within the century, who has not been a mere exception. He, as did no one of his own contemporaries, felt, expressed, and handed on the exact change wrought in English poetry by the great Romantic movement." And thus to link the poetry of the future to the best in the poetic achievements of the past was the mission of John Keats. With him poetry was supreme; it existed not as an instrument of social revolt nor of philosophical doctrine, but for the expression of beauty. Real poetry is not of any school. Its sweetness and its grace are Romantic and Classical alike. Freedom of conception and restraint of style are the twin servitors of the beauty for which poetry exists. This is the æsthetic view of literary art handed down not only to Tennyson, but to Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, and more or less adopted by them from Keats.

JOHN KEATS (1795–1821)

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

In these words is well expressed the poetical creed of John Keats, — passionate lover of beauty in all her phases, prophet and poet of the senses and their delights. Though his limited conditions shut him out from any direct acquaintance with the beauties of Grecian literature and art, he was nevertheless a Greek to the core of his beauty-worshipping nature. Though he could have known but little of mediæval literature, few have grasped better than he the delightful spirit of mediæval romance. His genius for the felicitous use of words is no less unerring than his instinct for the beautiful in the world of tastes and smells, sights and sounds. Like Spenser and Shelley, he is one of the most truly poetical of poets; like the former, at any rate, he drew his inspiration from the enchanted regions of the past. It is true that the poetry of Keats is lacking in that deeper thought and spiritual uplift which we associate with the very highest order of poetry. But it is also true that this young poet died when barely twenty-five years of age, before he had fully outgrown his youthful faults, or developed the wisdom and high seriousness which are necessary to one who would rank with the first of poets. And, still, according to Matthew Arnold, "no one in English poetry, save Shakespeare, has quite the fascinating felicity of Keats, his perfection of loveliness."

1795–1817. — Keats was born in London, October, 1795. His father, a livery-stable keeper in humble circumstances, in some way managed to send his son, then seven or eight years old, to a very fair school just outside of London, where the lad secured an elementary knowledge of Latin, and a very fair acquaintance, through dictionaries and translations, with classical mythology. When fifteen years of age, having lost his father and mother, the boy was apprenticed to a surgeon, with whom he worked and studied for five years. He had little love for the profession, however, and, after spending two more years in the hospitals of London, he abandoned it altogether. In his schoolboy days Keats had made friends who first awakened his love for poetry by lending him books, — the works of Chaucer, Chapman's *Homer*, and the *Faerie Queene* of Spenser; these same friends now introduced young Keats to Leigh Hunt and Shelley and other literary folk of London. About this time, 1817, when twenty-two years old, Keats brought out his first volume of verse — a collection crude and amateurish, as a whole, yet containing one of the finest of all English sonnets, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*.

1817–1821. — In 1818, while still in his twenty-third year, Keats produced his *Endymion*, a poem with many faults of immaturity, but in no wise deserving of the fierce assaults it called forth from the literary reviews of the time. Notwithstanding these attacks, the poet worked on with unabated vigor, and in 1820 published, among other poems, *Hyperion*, which shows the influence of Milton, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and the *Ode to a Grecian Urn*. About this time the seeds of consumption, which he had inherited, began to develop, and he soon knew that his days were numbered. In September, 1820, after publishing still another volume, the poet set sail for Italy, in the hope that the milder climate might prolong his life. In vain; in February of the next year he died, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery in Rome.

The poetic development of Keats was very sure and rapid. From the first, much of his verse shows a surprising energy and freshness; his later poems fully reveal the sense of color and form which so distinguishes his poetry at its best. Of all his poems, perhaps the most delightful are the odes, *On a Grecian Urn* and *To a Nightingale*, and the metrical romance, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, which has recently been called "the latest and most perfect flowering of the old Spenserian tree."

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

I

St. Agnes' Eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limp'd trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seem'd taking flight for heaven without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

II

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptur'd dead on each side seem to freeze,

Emprison'd in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

III

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flatter'd to tears this agèd man and poor;
But no — already had his death-bell rung;
The joys of all his life were said and sung;
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinner's sake to grieve.

IV

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanc'd, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their head the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

V

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting fairily
The brain, new-stuff'd, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,
And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and wing'd St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

VI

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honey'd middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

VII

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fix'd on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by — she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retir'd, not cool'd by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere;
She sigh'd for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

VIII

She danc'd along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallow'd hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the throng'd resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport,
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwink'd with faery fancy, all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before to-morrow morn.

IX

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She linger'd still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire

For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttress'd from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen,
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss — in sooth such things have been.

X

He ventures in: let no buzz'd whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

XI

Ah, happy chance! the agèd creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasp'd his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place;
They are all here to-night, the whole blood-thirsty race!

XII

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
He had a fever late, and in the fit
He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
More tame for his gray hairs — Alas me! flit!
Flit like a ghost away." — "Ah, Gossip dear,

We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
And tell me how" — "Good Saints! not here, not here:
Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

XIII

He follow'd through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume;
And as she mutter'd "Well-a — well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

XIV

'St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve —
Yet men will murder upon holy days:
Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
To venture so: it fills me with amaze
To see thee, Porphyro! — St. Agnes' Eve!
God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
This very night: good angels her deceive!
But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

XV

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an agèd crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

XVI

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart
Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep and dream
Alone with her good angels, far apart
From wicked men like thee. Go, go! I deem
Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

XVII

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
Or I will, even in a moment's space,
Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
And beard them, though they be more fang'd than wolves and bears."

XVIII

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
Were never miss'd." Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro,
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

XIX

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy

That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legion'd fairies paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

XX

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be storèd there
Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

XXI

So saying she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly pass'd;
The dame return'd, and whisper'd in his ear
To follow her, with agèd eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,
Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hush'd and chaste:
Where Porphyro took covert, pleas'd amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

XXII

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a mission'd spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turn'd, and down the agèd gossip led

To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove fray'd and fled.

XXIII

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No utter'd syllable, or woe betide!
But to her heart her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

XXIV

A casement high and triple-arch'd there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damask'd wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blush'd with blood of queens and kings.

XXV

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for Heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seem'd a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven: — Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

XXVI

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees,
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one,
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:
Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

XXVII

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplex'd she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppress'd
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day,
Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain,
Clasp'd like a missal where swart Paynims pray,
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

XXVIII

Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listen'd to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hush'd carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peep'd, where, lo! — how fast she slept.

XXIX

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set

A table, and, half anguish'd, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet: —
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarionet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone: —
The hall-door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

XXX

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavender'd,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd,
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrops, tinct with cinnamon,
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez, and spicèd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedar'd Lebanon.

XXXI

These delicates he heap'd with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retirèd quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light. —
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!
Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

XXXII

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains: — 'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:

It seem'd he never, never could redeem
From such a steadfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mus'd awhile, entoil'd in woofèd phantasies.

XXXIII

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute, —
Tumultuous, — and, in chords that tenderest be,
He play'd an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence call'd " La belle dame sans mercy : "
Close to her ear touching the melody ; —
Wherewith disturb'd, she utter'd a soft moan :
He ceased — she panted quick — and suddenly
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone :
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

XXXIV

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep :
There was a painful change, that nigh expell'd
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep;
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep ;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she look'd so dreamingly.

XXXV

" Ah, Porphyro ! " she said, " but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tuneable with every sweetest vow ;
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear :
How changed thou art ! how pallid, chill, and drear !
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear !
Oh leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

XXXVI

Beyond a mortal man impassion'd far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flush'd, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odour with the violet, —
Solution sweet: meantime the frost-wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window-panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

XXXVII

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream, alas! alas! and woe is mine!
Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine. —
Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing —
A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

XXXVIII

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil dyed?
Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famish'd pilgrim, — saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

XXXIX

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
Arise — arise! the morning is at hand; —
The bloated wassailers will never heed: —

Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see, —
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

XL

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears;
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found;
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-droop'd lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horsemen, hawk, and hound,
Flutter'd in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

XLI

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide: —
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

XLII

And they are gone: ay, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitch'd, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand *aves* told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
  My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
  One minute past, and Lethè-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
  But being too happy in thine happiness, —
    That thou, light-wingèd Dryad of the trees,
      In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
  Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
  Cool'd a long age in the deep-delvèd earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country-green,
  Dance, and Provençal song, and sun-burnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
  Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
    With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
      And purple-stainèd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
  And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
  What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
  Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
  Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
    Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
      And leaden-ey'd despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
  Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets cover'd up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath,
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,—
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music: — Do I wake or sleep?

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

I

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempè or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah! happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty, — that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

I

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
Alone and palely loitering?
The sedge is wither'd from the lake,
And no birds sing.

II

Ah, what can ail thee, wretched wight,
So haggard and so woe-begone?
The squirrel's granary is full,
And the harvest's done.

III

I see a lily on thy brow,
With anguish moist and fever dew;
And on thy cheek a fading rose
Fast withereth too.

IV

I met a lady in the meads,
Full beautiful, a faery's child;
Her hair was long, her foot was light,
And her eyes were wild.

V

I set her on my pacing steed,
And nothing else saw all day long;
For sideways would she lean and sing
A faery's song.

VI

I made a garland for her head,
And bracelets too, and fragrant zone;
She look'd at me as she did love,
And made sweet moan.

VII

She found me roots of relish sweet,
And honey wild, and manna dew;
And sure in language strange she said,
I love thee true.

VIII

She took me to her elfin grot,
And there she gaz'd and sighèd deep;
And there I shut her wild sad eyes —
So kissed to sleep.

IX

And there we slumber'd on the moss,
And there I dream'd, ah woe betide,
The latest dream I ever dream'd,
On the cold hill side.

X

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
Who cry'd — "La belle Dame sans merci
Hath thee in thrall!"

XI

I saw their starv'd lips in the gloom,
With horrid warning gapèd wide,
And I awoke, and found me here
On the cold hill side.

XII

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering,
Though the sedge is wither'd from the lake
And no birds sing.

SONNETS

ON FIRST LOOKING INTO CHAPMAN'S HOMER

Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen:
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne:
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

ON THE GRASSHOPPER AND CRICKET

The poetry of earth is never dead:
When all the birds are faint with the hot sun,
And hide in cooling trees, a voice will run
From hedge to hedge about the new-mown mead;

That is the Grasshopper's — he takes the lead
In summer luxury, — he has never done
With his delights; for, when tired out with fun,
He rests at ease beneath some pleasant weed.
The poetry of earth is ceasing never:
On a lone winter evening, when the frost
Has wrought a silence, from the stove there shrills
The Cricket's song, in warmth increasing ever,
And seems to one in drowsiness half lost,
The Grasshopper's among some grassy hills.

4. THE VICTORIAN POETS

It is practically impossible to condense into the limits of a brief sketch any detailed account of this last period of the history of English poetry. It is also doubtful whether an age so near us, indeed in most respects our own, so complex in its interests and so multiform in its achievements, can be made the subject of any general criticism which will stand the test of time. The Victorian era is characterized by social change and intellectual activity. Education has been vastly extended, and the power and importance of literature correspondingly increased. New problems have been constantly arising; and much of the poetry of the age has consciously or unconsciously been concerned with a solution of these problems: with fresh adjustments in society, wiser ideals in politics, a wider outlook in religion, the successive revelations of science. Hence, an earnestness of tone, a deliberative manner, a rapt seriousness, in our later poetry, rather in excess of that which has characterized other ages. Still the Romantic tendency of poetry continues, as one critic well expresses it, "in the novelty and variety of its form, in its search after undiscovered springs of beauty and truth, in its emotional and imaginative intensity."

As regards poetical importance, the age takes rank as little inferior to that of Shakespeare; perhaps equal to that of Wordsworth. It has been especially distinguished by the names of TENNYSON and BROWNING, and by the lesser glory of such poets as ARNOLD and MORRIS, SWINBURNE, MRS. BROWNING, and the ROSSETTIS; but we shall first turn to one who, by his encyclopædic culture, his genial optimism and bluff acceptance of the spirit of his age, well represents the earlier and less poetical portion of this period: one who, writing in the martial style of Scott, endowed his heroes not merely with manly courage, but with manly character, with noble devotion to a righteous cause; one who may safely be

called the most brilliant ballad-writer of his age. There are poets' poets and poets of the learned; but the poets of the people deserve no less to be remembered than they. For the poets of the people are also the poets of the boys — of those who are to be the fathers of the succeeding race. "If the boys of England," says Mr. Miles, and we may add "of America," "could be polled as to their favorite poet, Sir Walter Scott and Lord Macaulay would doubtless divide the honors; and if the favorite poem were in question, *Horatius* would probably be voted first."

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800–1859)

Macaulay, unlike most of the other authors with whom we have been dealing, was principally a writer of prose. His work as essayist and historian so overshadows his other activities that he is ordinarily not thought of as a poet at all. It has, in fact, been the practice of many critics to follow the lead of Matthew Arnold in treating Macaulay's verse with something very much like contempt. However, as Saintsbury and others have justly replied, those who fail to see the true poetic quality in this vigorous and eloquent verse only prove the limitations in the range of their own poetic sympathies. Macaulay's poems are not addressed to the ear of the critic, although their vivid pictures and stirring metrical form ought to place them above even the critic's censure. They do not aim to expound the deeper significance of life, nor its subtler emotions; but to express in language bravely unadorned but wondrously effective the nobler passions of the simple soul. They are gloriously popular, and have moved the hearts and fired the imaginations of many readers for whom Keats or Browning or even Milton would have little message. The volume of Macaulay's poetry was very slight: a few early pieces, for the most part little known; several martial poems such as *Ivry*, *The Battle of Naseby*, and *The Armada*, also of this early period; and, finally, the famous ballads of 1842, — *Horatius*, *The Battle of Lake Regillus*, *Virginia*, and *The Prophecy of Capys*, — together known as the *Lays of Ancient Rome*. Macaulay's life is not intimately associated with the history of poetry, but it is nevertheless one of the most interesting and inspiring in the roll of English men of letters.

1800–1825. — Born in Leicestershire, October, 1800, Macaulay was the eldest of nine children. His parents were people of education and refinement: the mother of Quaker descent, the father a rigid Scotch Presbyterian and prominent abolitionist. The stories of the boy's precocity are something marvellous. It is said that at the age of three he was "an incessant reader." Before he was eight "he was a historian and a poet." By the time he was fifteen he could read in at least six languages. His memory was no less wonderful than his capacity for

learning. His earlier education was received at home and in schools near home. He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, at the age of eighteen, and in 1824 he was made a Fellow of his college. During the earlier years of his college course he wrote two prize poems, and, in the later, a number of critical essays.

1825–1838. — In 1825 appeared Macaulay's famous essay on *Milton*, the first of a long series which he wrote for the *Edinburgh Review*. His abilities as a writer, recognized from the first, soon brought him to the attention of the Whigs; and in 1830 he was given a seat in Parliament, where we soon hear of him as an active and successful advocate of the famous "Reform Bill" of 1832. In 1834 he was sent to India as a member of the Supreme Council. Here he remained nearly five years, achieving several important governmental reforms, and amassing a considerable fortune.

1838–1859. — Back in England again, he was at once elected to Parliament from Edinburgh — a position which he held, first for nine, and again later for four, years. All this time he was a contributor of critical and biographical essays to the *Edinburgh Review*; during the latter portion of it he was also employed in writing his celebrated *History of England*. In 1842 his *Lays of Ancient Rome* appeared; the next year, a volume of his collected essays; in 1848, the first two volumes of his *History*. When he was fifty-seven years of age, he was made a peer, and chose as his title "Baron Macaulay of Rothley." Two years later he died and was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. In his later life he had been the recipient of many distinguished honors, both at home and abroad — honors well merited by the energetic, generous, brilliant man of letters.

The general reader may be sure of finding pleasure in almost any of Macaulay's poems, for all are simple, manly, chivalrous; the poetry of the clarion-call. Among the earlier pieces, *Ivry* is probably the best; while of the *Lays* the choice would seem to lie between *Virginia* and *Horatius*. The latter is included in this volume, as undoubtedly the best known and most typical of the four.

HORATIUS

A LAY MADE ABOUT THE YEAR OF THE CITY CCCLX

I

Lars Porsena of Clusium
By the Nine Gods he swore
That the great house of Tarquin
Should suffer wrong no more.

By the Nine Gods he swore it,
And named a trysting day,
And bade his messengers ride forth,
East and west and south and north,
To summon his array.

II

East and west and south and north
The messengers ride fast,
And tower and town and cottage
Have heard the trumpet's blast.
Shame on the false Etruscan
Who lingers in his home,
When Porsena of Clusium
Is on the march for Rome.

III

The horsemen and the footmen
Are pouring in amain
From many a stately market-place;
From many a fruitful plain;
From many a lonely hamlet,
Which, hid by beech and pine,
Like an eagle's nest, hangs on the crest
Of purple Apennine;

IV

From lordly Volaterræ,
Where scowls the far-famed hold
Piled by the hands of giants
For godlike kings of old;
From seagirt Populonia,
Whose sentinels descry
Sardinia's snowy mountain-tops
Fringing the southern sky;

V

From the proud mart of Pisæ,
Queen of the western waves,

Where ride Massilia's triremes
Heavy with fair-haired slaves;
From where sweet Clanis wanders
Through corn and vine and flowers;
From where Cortona lifts to heaven
Her diadem of towers.

VI

Tall are the oaks whose acorns
Drop in dark Auser's rill;
Fat are the stags that champ the boughs
Of the Ciminian hill;
Beyond all streams Clitumnus
Is to the herdsman dear;
Best of all pools the fowler loves
The great Volsinian mere.

VII

But now no stroke of woodman
Is heard by Auser's rill;
No hunter tracks the stag's green path
Up the Ciminian hill;
Unwatched along Clitumnus
Grazes the milk-white steer;
Unharmed the water fowl may dip
In the Volsinian mere.

VIII

The harvests of Arretium,
This year, old men shall reap,
This year, young boys in Umbro
Shall plunge the struggling sheep;
And in the vats of Luna,
This year, the must shall foam
Round the white feet of laughing girls
Whose sires have marched to Rome.

IX

There be thirty chosen prophets,
The wisest of the land,
Who always by Lars Porsena
Both morn and evening stand:
Evening and morn the Thirty
Have turned the verses o'er,
Traced from the right on linen white
By mighty seers of yore.

X

And with one voice the Thirty
Have their glad answer given:
"Go forth, go forth, Lars Porsena;
Go forth, beloved of Heaven;
Go, and return in glory
To Clusium's royal dome;
And hang round Nurscia's altars
The golden shields of Rome."

XI

And now hath every city
Sent up her tale of men;
The foot are fourscore thousand,
The horse are thousands ten:
Before the gates of Sutrium
Is met the great array.
A proud man was Lars Porsena
Upon the trysting day.

XII

For all the Etruscan armies
Were ranged beneath his eye,
And many a banished Roman,
And many a stout ally;
And with a mighty following
To join the muster came

The Tusculan Mamilius,
Prince of the Latian name.

XIII

But by the yellow Tiber
Was tumult and affright:
From all the spacious champaign
To Rome men took their flight.
A mile around the city,
The throng stopped up the ways:
A fearful sight it was to see
Through two long nights and days.

XIV

For agèd folks on crutches,
And women great with child,
And mothers sobbing over babes
That clung to them and smiled,
And sick men borne in litters
High on the necks of slaves,
And troops of sun-burned husbandmen
With reaping-hooks and staves,

XV

And droves of mules and asses
Laden with skins of wine,
And endless flocks of goats and sheep,
And endless herds of kine.
And endless trains of waggons
That creaked beneath the weight
Of corn-sacks and of household goods,
Choked every roaring gate.

XVI

Now, from the rock Tarpeian,
Could the wan burghers spy
The line of blazing villages
Red in the midnight sky.

The Fathers of the City,
They sat all night and day,
For every hour some horseman came
With tidings of dismay.

XVII

To eastward and to westward
Have spread the Tuscan bands;
Nor house, nor fence, nor dovecote
In Crustumerium stands.
Verbenna down to Ostia
Hath wasted all the plain;
Astur hath stormed Janiculum,
And the stout guards are slain.

XVIII

I wis, in all the Senate,
There was no heart so bold,
But sore it ached and fast it beat,
When that ill news was told.
Forthwith up rose the Consul,
Up rose the Fathers all;
In haste they girded up their gowns,
And hied them to the wall.

XIX

They held a council standing
Before the River-Gate;
Short time was there, ye well may guess,
For musing or debate.
Out spake the Consul roundly:
"The bridge must straight go down;
For, since Janiculum is lost,
Naught else can save the town."

XX

Just then a scout came flying,
All wild with haste and fear;

"To arms! to arms! Sir Consul:
Lars Porsena is here."
On the low hills to westward
The Consul fixed his eye,
And saw the swarthy storm of dust
Rise fast along the sky.

XXI

And nearer fast and nearer
Doth the red whirlwind come;
And louder still and still more loud,
From underneath that rolling cloud,
Is heard the trumpet's war-note proud,
The trampling, and the hum.
And plainly and more plainly
Now through the gloom appears,
Far to left and far to right,
In broken gleams of dark-blue light,
The long array of helmets bright,
The long array of spears.

XXII

And plainly and more plainly,
Above that glimmering line,
Now might ye see the banners
Of twelve fair cities shine;
But the banner of proud Clusium
Was highest of them all,
The terror of the Umbrian,
The terror of the Gaul.

XXIII

And plainly and more plainly
Now might the burghers know,
By port and vest, by horse and crest,
Each warlike Lucumo.

There Cilnius of Arretium
On his fleet roan was seen;
And Astur of the fourfold shield,
Girt with the brand none else may wield,
Tolumnius with the belt of gold,
And dark Verbenna from the hold
By reedy Thrasymene.

XXIV

Fast by the royal standard,
O'erlooking all the war,
Lars Porsena of Clusium
Sat in his ivory car.
By the right wheel rode Mamilius
Prince of the Latian name;
And by the left, false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame.

XXV

But when the face of Sextus
Was seen among the foes,
A yell that rent the firmament
From all the town arose.
On the house-tops was no woman
But spat towards him and hissed,
No child but screamed out curses,
And shook its little fist.

XXVI

But the Consul's brow was sad,
And the Consul's speech was low,
And darkly looked he at the wall,
And darkly at the foe.
"Their van will be upon us
Before the bridge goes down;
And if they once may win the bridge,
What hope to save the town?"

XXVII

Then out spake brave Horatius,
The Captain of the Gate:
"To every man upon this earth
Death cometh soon or late.
And how can man die better
Than facing fearful odds,
For the ashes of his fathers,
And the temples of his Gods,

XXVIII

"And for the tender mother
Who dandled him to rest,
And for the wife who nurses
His baby at her breast,
And for the holy maidens
Who feed the eternal flame,
To save them from false Sextus,
That wrought the deed of shame?

XXIX

"Hew down the bridge, Sir Consul,
With all the speed ye may;
I, with two more to help me,
Will hold the foe in play.
In yon strait path a thousand
May well be stopped by three.
Now who will stand on either hand,
And keep the bridge with me?"

XXX

Then out spake Spurius Lartius;
A Ramnian proud was he:
"Lo, I will stand at thy right hand,
And keep the bridge with thee."
And out spake strong Herminius;
Of Titian blood was he:

"I will abide on thy left side,
And keep the bridge with thee."

XXXI

"Horatius," quoth the Consul,
"As thou sayest, so let it be."
And straight against that great array
Forth went the dauntless Three.
For Romans in Rome's quarrel
Spared neither land nor gold,
Nor son nor wife, nor limb nor life,
In the brave days of old.

XXXII

Then none was for a party;
Then all were for the state;
Then the great man helped the poor,
And the poor man loved the great:
Then lands were fairly portioned;
Then spoils were fairly sold:
The Romans were like brothers
In the brave days of old.

XXXIII

Now Roman is to Roman
More hateful than a foe,
And the Tribunes beard the high,
And the Fathers grind the low.
As we wax hot in faction,
In battle we wax cold:
Wherefore men fight not as they fought
In the brave days of old.

XXXIV

Now while the Three were tightening
Their harness on their backs,
The Consul was the foremost man
To take in hand an axe:

And Fathers, mixed with Commons,
Seized hatchet, bar, and crow,
And smote upon the planks above,
And loosed the props below.

XXXV

Meanwhile the Tuscan army,
Right glorious to behold,
Came flashing back the noonday light,
Rank behind rank, like surges bright
Of a broad sea of gold.
Four hundred trumpets sounded
A peal of warlike glee,
As that great host, with measured tread,
And spears advanced, and ensigns spread,
Rolled slowly towards the bridge's head,
Where stood the dauntless Three.

XXXVI

The Three stood calm and silent,
And looked upon the foes,
And a great shout of laughter
From all the vanguard rose:
And forth three chiefs came spurring
Before that deep array;
To earth they sprang, their swords they drew,
And lifted high their shields, and flew
To win the narrow way;

XXXVII

Aunus from green Tifernum,
Lord of the Hill of Vines;
And Seius, whose eight hundred slaves
Sicken in Ilva's mines;
And Picus, long to Clusium
Vassal in peace and war,
Who led to fight his Umbrian powers

From that grey crag where, girt with towers,
The fortress of Nequinum lowers
O'er the pale waves of Nar.

XXXVIII

Stout Lartius hurled down Aunus
Into the stream beneath:
Herminius struck at Sëius,
And clove him to the teeth:
At Picus brave Horatius
Darted one fiery thrust;
And the proud Umbrian's gilded arms
Clashed in the bloody dust.

XXXIX

Then Ocnus of Falerii
Rushed on the Roman Three;
And Lausulus of Urgo,
The rover of the sea;
And Aruns of Volsinium,
Who slew the great wild boar,
The great wild boar that had his den
Amidst the reeds of Cosa's fen,
And wasted fields, and slaughtered men,
Along Albinia's shore.

XL

Herminius smote down Aruns:
Lartius laid Ocnus low:
Right to the heart of Lausulus
Horatius sent a blow.
"Lie there," he cried, "fell pirate!
No more, aghast and pale,
From Ostia's walls the crowd shall mark
The track of thy destroying bark.
No more Campania's hinds shall fly
To woods and caverns when they spy
Thy thrice-accursèd sail."

XLI

But now no sound of laughter
Was heard among the foes;
A wild and wrathful clamour
From all the vanguard rose.
Six spears' lengths from the entrance
Halted that deep array,
And for a space no man came forth
To win the narrow way.

XLII

But hark! the cry is Astur:
And lo! the ranks divide;
And the great Lord of Luna
Comes with his stately stride.
Upon his ample shoulders
Clangs loud the fourfold shield,
And in his hand he shakes the brand
Which none but he can wield.

XLIII

He smiled on those bold Romans
A smile serene and high;
He eyed the flinching Tuscans,
And scorn was in his eye.
Quoth he, "The she-wolf's litter
Stand savagely at bay:
But will ye dare to follow,
If Astur clears the way?"

XLIV

Then, whirling up his broadsword
With both hands to the height,
He rushed against Horatius,
And smote with all his might.
With shield and blade Horatius
Right deftly turned the blow.

The blow, though turned, came yet too nigh;
It missed his helm, but gashed his thigh:
The Tuscans raised a joyful cry
To see the red blood flow.

XLV

He reeled, and on Herminius
He leaned one breathing-space;
Then, like a wild cat mad with wounds,
Sprang right at Astur's face;
Through teeth, and skull, and helmet
So fierce a thrust he sped,
The good sword stood a hand-breadth out
Behind the Tuscan's head.

XLVI

And the great Lord of Luna
Fell at that deadly stroke,
As falls on Mount Alvernus
A thunder-smitten oak.
Far o'er the crashing forest
The giant arms lie spread;
And the pale augurs, muttering low,
Gaze on the blasted head.

XLVII

On Astur's throat Horatius
Right firmly pressed his heel,
And thrice and four times tugged amain,
Ere he wrenched out the steel.
"And see," he cried, "the welcome,
Fair guests, that waits you here!
What noble Lucumo comes next
To taste our Roman cheer?"

XLVIII

But at his haughty challenge
A sullen murmur ran,

Mingled of wrath, and shame, and dread,
  Along that glittering van.
There lacked not men of prowess,
  Nor men of lordly race;
For all Etruria's noblest
  Were round the fatal place.

XLIX

But all Etruria's noblest
  Felt their hearts sink to see
On the earth the bloody corpses,
  In the path the dauntless Three:
And, from the ghastly entrance
  Where those bold Romans stood,
All shrank, like boys who unaware,
Ranging the woods to start a hare,
Come to the mouth of the dark lair
Where, growling low, a fierce old bear
  Lies amidst bones and blood.

L

Was none who would be foremost
  To lead such dire attack:
But those behind cried "Forward!"
  And those before cried "Back!"
And backward now and forward
  Wavers the deep array;
And on the tossing sea of steel,
  To and fro the standards reel;
And the victorious trumpet-peal
  Dies fitfully away.

LI

Yet one man for one moment
  Stood out before the crowd;
Well known was he to all the Three,
  And they gave him greeting loud,—

"Now welcome, welcome, Sextus!
Now welcome to thy home!
Why dost thou stay, and turn away?
Here lies the road to Rome."

LII

Thrice looked he at the city;
Thrice looked he at the dead;
And thrice came on in fury,
And thrice turned back in dread:
And, white with fear and hatred,
Scowled at the narrow way,
Where, wallowing in a pool of blood,
The bravest Tuscans lay.

LIII

But meanwhile axe and lever
Have manfully been plied;
And now the bridge hangs tottering
Above the boiling tide.
"Come back, come back, Horatius!"
Loud cried the Fathers all;
"Back, Lartius! back, Herminius!
Back, ere the ruin fall!"

LIV

Back darted Spurius Lartius;
Herminius darted back:
And, as they passed, beneath their feet
They felt the timbers crack.
But when they turned their faces,
And on the farther shore
Saw brave Horatius stand alone,
They would have crossed once more.

LV

But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,

And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream.
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam.

LVI

And, like a horse unbroken
When first he feels the rein,
The furious river struggled hard,
And tossed his tawny mane,
And burst the curb, and bounded,
Rejoicing to be free,
And, whirling down, in fierce career,
Battlement, and plank, and pier,
Rushed headlong to the sea.

LVII

Alone stood brave Horatius,
But constant still in mind, —
Thrice thirty thousand foes before,
And the broad flood behind.
"Down with him!" cried false Sextus,
With a smile on his pale face.
"Now yield thee," cried Lars Porsena,
"Now yield thee to our grace."

LVIII

Round turned he, as not deigning
Those craven ranks to see;
Naught spake he to Lars Porsena,
To Sextus naught spake he;
But he saw on Palatinus
The white porch of his home;
And he spake to the noble river
That rolls by the towers of Rome:

LIX

"Oh, Tiber! father Tiber!
To whom the Romans pray,
A Roman's life, a Roman's arms,
Take thou in charge this day!"
So he spake, and speaking sheathed
The good sword by his side,
And with his harness on his back,
Plunged headlong in the tide.

LX

No sound of joy or sorrow
Was heard from either bank;
But friends and foes in dumb surprise,
With parted lips and straining eyes,
Stood gazing where he sank;
And when above the surges
They saw his crest appear,
All Rome sent forth a rapturous cry,
And even the ranks of Tuscany
Could scarce forbear to cheer.

LXI

But fiercely ran the current,
Swollen high by months of rain:
And fast his blood was flowing;
And he was sore in pain,
And heavy with his armour,
And spent with changing blows:
And oft they thought him sinking,
But still again he rose.

LXII

Never, I ween, did swimmer,
In such an evil case,
Struggle through such a raging flood
Safe to the landing place:

But his limbs were borne up bravely
By the brave heart within,
And our good father Tiber
Bare bravely up his chin.

LXIII

"Curse on him!" quoth false Sextus;
"Will not the villain drown?
But for this stay, ere close of day
We should have sacked the town!"
"Heaven help him!" quoth Lars Porsena,
"And bring him safe to shore;
For such a gallant feat of arms
Was never seen before."

LXIV

And now he feels the bottom;
Now on dry earth he stands;
Now round him throng the Fathers
To press his gory hands;
And now, with shouts and clapping,
And noise of weeping loud,
He enters through the River-Gate,
Borne by the joyous crowd.

LXV

They gave him of the corn-land,
That was of public right,
As much as two strong oxen
Could plough from morn till night;
And they made a molten image,
And set it up on high,
And there it stands unto this day
To witness if I lie.

LXVI

It stands in the Comitium,
Plain for all folk to see,

Horatius in his harness,
Halting upon one knee:
And underneath is written,
In letters all of gold,
How valiantly he kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

LXVII

And still his name sounds stirring
Unto the men of Rome,
As the trumpet-blast that cries to them
To charge the Volscian home;
And wives still pray to Juno
For boys with hearts as bold
As his who kept the bridge so well
In the brave days of old.

LXVIII

And in the nights of winter,
When the cold north winds blow,
And the long howling of the wolves
Is heard amidst the snow;
When round the lonely cottage
Roars loud the tempest's din,
And the good logs of Algidus
Roar louder yet within;

LXIX

When the oldest cask is opened,
And the largest lamp is lit;
When the chestnuts glow in the embers,
And the kid turns on the spit;
When young and old in circle
Around the firebrands close;
When the girls are weaving baskets,
And the lads are shaping bows;

LXX

When the goodman mends his armour,
And trims his helmet's plume;
When the goodwife's shuttle merrily
Goes flashing through the loom;
With weeping and with laughter
Still is the story told,
How well Horatius kept the bridge
In the brave days of old.

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809–1892)

Few poets have been so completely representative of their time, have entered so fully into its moods, or have, to such a degree, first moulded and then satisfied the tastes of their contemporaries as Alfred Tennyson. If the rank of a poet depends upon the diverse nature of his poetic accomplishment, or his recognition of the public need and a universal acceptance by his auditors, or an entire devotion to his art, or a lofty conception of his mission, or the harmony and effectiveness of his performance — then Tennyson's place among English poets must be very high. He was, in the fullest and best sense of the word, a scholar, delighting to live in seclusion and in communion with nature and his books. He not only thoroughly knew his own age, but also knew, as few others have known, the history and best traditions of the literature that preceded him. He has been called the poet of art rather than of energy. His technical skill is equal to Pope's, though he is as much broader than Pope as nineteenth-century poetry is broader than poetry of the eighteenth century. He has been frequently styled the literary successor of Keats, but he added to Keats's power of happily combining color, music, and sensuous form, a moral earnestness, a range of interest, a structural imagination, and a trained literary discrimination, of which the earlier poet shows little. No other English poet, not even Spenser or Wordsworth, has more conscientiously devoted himself to the cultivation of his talent. For over sixty years he was a poet pure and simple, writing, revising, studying, living for his art; and he made of himself an artist whose skill has rarely been surpassed. Few writers have so fully possessed the ability to profit by the work of their predecessors, and, at the same time, to develop so distinct an individuality. Graceful, melodious, felicitous in technique, exquisite in imagery, and noble in aspiration, he follows not far behind the very best of English

poets. So quiet and retired was his life that an account of it can be scarcely more than a record of his successive publications.

1809–1832. — Tennyson was born in Lincolnshire in 1809, the fourth son in a large and highly gifted family. His father was a clergyman, and a man of unusual learning and intelligence. Aside from a few rather unhappy years at school, the boy received his early education at home, where the wholesome country life and the companionship and careful training of his father did much toward insuring a sound literary development. When he was but eighteen years of age, he published with his brother Charles (then nineteen) a little volume now valuable because of its rarity, called *Poems of Two Brothers*. The same year he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Here he gained some little note as a college poet, and made many warm and lasting friends (among them the brilliant but short-lived Arthur Hallam); but he left the university in 1831 without taking a degree, and at once devoted himself entirely to poetry. The year before leaving college he had published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, a book which was rather severely handled by the critics.

1832–1850. — Incited by these not wholly undeserved strictures, the poet, after publishing a second volume in 1832, sat quietly and diligently down to a course of self-development. He spent the next ten years chiefly in London, in the study of history, science, language, literature — anything which might discipline and mature his poetic ability. The outcome appeared in the marked distinction of the two volumes which he published in 1842 — volumes which established beyond cavil his reputation as a poet. Among these poems of 1842 were some of his best, such as the *Morte d'Arthur*, *Ulysses*, and *Locksley Hall*. In 1847 appeared *The Princess*, and in 1850, his forty-first year and the year of his marriage, *In Memoriam* was published. Begun long before upon the death of his dear friend, Hallam, this is the apotheosis of sorrow transfigured by immortal hope. A few months later, upon the death of Wordsworth, Tennyson was made Poet Laureate.

1850–1875. — At the beginning of this period the poet took up his residence in the Isle of Wight, at Farringford, partly through love of the country and partly to escape from the publicity which his shy nature abhorred. After some fifteen years, when this retreat had also begun to be the Mecca of literary pilgrimages, he established a summer home at Aldworth, in Surrey. In these two country homes, surrounded by his family and congenial friends, he lived out a long, quiet, contented life, much as Wordsworth had done at Grasmere and Rydal Mount some fifty years before. All this time he was steadily at work publishing, at intervals of about five years and in the order named, — *Maud*, the

first four *Idylls of the King*, *Enoch Arden*, *The Holy Grail*, and other *Idylls*.

1875–1892. — In 1875 appeared the first of his three historical dramas. These are worthy of note, not so much for their intrinsic value, which is not inconsiderable, as for the interesting fact that the poet, now sixty-six years old, had the energy and ambition to enter upon an entirely new field of work, that of dramatic poetry. In fact, *Becket*, the best of his dramas, was written when Tennyson was over seventy-five years of age. But this by no means completes the tale of his work. Until the end of his life, poem after poem appeared, which, while adding nothing to his already established fame, are yet so good that we should be loath to part with one of them. Indeed, *Crossing the Bar*, the work of his eighty-first year, is one of the best things he ever wrote. In 1884 Tennyson accepted a peerage, with the title of Baron of Aldworth and Farringford — an honor which he had previously twice declined. The poet died at Aldworth in his eighty-fourth year, October, 1892, and was buried with imposing ceremony in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Almost everything in Tennyson is worth reading. Certainly no other English author has written so many charming and artistic short poems. A few of these are given below. His longer poems, such as *The Princess*, *Enoch Arden*, or the different *Idylls of the King*, are as entertaining and simple as they are beautiful. Three of the *Idylls* may be found in a later portion of this book. *In Memoriam*, which is by many regarded as Tennyson's greatest work, is one of the noblest elegies ever written. Three things seem to insure Tennyson's popularity: he is almost always clear, he is uniformly interesting, and he is essentially modern. In the drama he did good, but not preëminent service; in the ballad and the dramatic monologue he is not easily excelled; in the lyric he has few superiors; in the idyll and the elegy he is surpassed by none.

ŒNONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars

The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning: but in front
The gorges, opening wide apart, reveal
Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful Œnone, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the hills.
Her cheek had lost the rose, and round her neck
Floated her hair or seem'd to float in rest.
She, leaning on a fragment twined with vine,
Sang to the stillness, till the mountain-shade
Sloped downward to her seat from the upper cliff.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the hill:
The grasshopper is silent in the grass:
The lizard, with his shadow on the stone,
Rests like a shadow, and the winds are dead.
The purple flower droops: the golden bee
Is lily-cradled: I alone awake.
My eyes are full of tears, my heart of love;
My heart is breaking, and my eyes are dim,
And I am all aweary of my life.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Hear me, O Earth, hear me, O Hills, O Caves
That house the cold crown'd snake! O mountain brooks,
I am the daughter of a River-God,
Hear me, for I will speak, and build up all
My sorrow with my song, as yonder walls
Rose slowly to a music slowly breathed,
A cloud that gather'd shape: for it may be
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
I waited underneath the dawning hills,
Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-dark,
And dewy-dark aloft the mountain pine:
Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd, white-hooved,
Came up from reedy Simois all alone.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Far-off the torrent call'd me from the cleft:
Far up the solitary morning smote
The streaks of virgin snow. With downdropt eyes
I sat alone: white-breasted like a star
Fronting the dawn he moved; a leopard skin
Droop'd from his shoulder, but his sunny hair
Cluster'd about his temples like a God's,
And his cheek brighten'd as the foam-bow brightens
When the wind blows the foam, and all my heart
Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He smiled, and opening out his milk-white palm
Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian gold,
That smelt ambrosially, and while I look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of speech
Came down upon my heart.
"'My own Œnone,
Beautiful-brow'd Œnone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingrav'n
"For the most fair," would seem to award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace
Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to mine,
And added 'This was cast upon the board,

When all the full-faced presence of the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus; whereupon
Rose feud, with question unto whom 'twere due:
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphroditè, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld, unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of Gods.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon: one silvery cloud
Had lost his way between the piney sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies: and a wind arose,
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,
This way and that, in many a wild festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarlèd boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud, and lean'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her, to whom
Coming thro' Heaven, like a light that grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue
Wherewith to embellish state, 'from many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed with corn,
Or labor'd mines undrainable of ore.

Honor,' she said, 'and homage, tax, and toll,
From many an inland town and haven large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest towers.'

"O mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake of power,
'Which in all action is the end of all;
Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred
And throned of wisdom — from all neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,
From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,
Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power,
Only, are likest gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying bliss
In knowledge of their own supremacy.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly fruit
Out at arm's length, so much the thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and barèd limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry cheek
Kept watch, waiting decision, made reply:

"'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power, (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.'

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Again she said: 'I woo thee not with gifts.
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,
Unbiass'd by self profit, O, rest thee sure
That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of shocks,
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom.'
"Here she ceased,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, 'O Paris,
Give it to Pallas!' but he heard me not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is me!

"O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Idalian Aphroditè beautiful,
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward drew
From her warm brows and bosom her deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid throat
And shoulder: from the violets her light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she moved.

"Dear mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild eyes,
The herald of her triumph, drawing nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, 'I promise thee

The fairest and most loving wife in Greece.'
She spoke and laugh'd: I shut my sight for fear:
But when I look'd, Paris had raised his arm,
And I beheld great Herè's angry eyes,
As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die.

"Yet, mother Ida, hearken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife? am I not fair?
My love hath told me so a thousand times.
Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,
Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail
Crouch'd fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?
Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms
Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest
Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew
Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains
Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest pines,
My dark tall pines, that plumed the craggy ledge
High over the blue gorge, and all between
The snowy peak and snow-white cataract
Foster'd the callow eaglet — from beneath
Whose thick mysterious boughs in the dark morn
The panther's roar came muffled, while I sat
Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Œnone see the morning mist
Sweep thro' them; never see them overlaid
With narrow moon-lit slits of silver cloud,
Between the loud stream and the trembling stars.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin'd folds,
Among the fragments tumbled from the glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with her,
The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleïan banquet-hall
And cast the golden fruit upon the board,
And bred this change; that I might speak my mind,
And tell her to her face how much I hate
Her presence, hated both of Gods and men.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hath he not sworn his love a thousand times,
In this green valley, under this green hill,
Ev'n on this hand, and sitting on this stone?
Seal'd it with kisses? water'd it with tears?
O happy tears, and how unlike to these!
O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?
O death, death, death, thou ever-floating cloud,
There are enough unhappy on this earth;
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:
I pray thee, pass before my light of life,
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.
Thou weighest heavy on the heart within,
Weigh heavy on my eyelids: let me die.

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more and more
Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,
Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother
Conjectures of the features of her child
Ere it is born: her child!—a shudder comes
Across me: never child be born of me,
Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

"O mother, hear me yet before I die.
Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone,

Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
Walking the cold and starless road of Death
Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says.
A fire dances before her, and a sound
Rings ever in her ears of armèd men.
What this may be I know not, but I know
That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire."

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd
By slow horses; and unhail'd

The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd
Skimming down to Camelot:
But who hath seen her wave her hand?
Or at the casement seen her stand?
Or is she known in all the land,
The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
In among the bearded barley,
Hear a song that echoes cheerly
From the river winding clearly
Down to tower'd Camelot:
And by the moon the reaper weary,
Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
Listening, whispers "'Tis the fairy
Lady of Shalott."

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
A magic web with colours gay.
She has heard a whisper say,
A curse is on her if she stay
To look down to Camelot.
She knows not what the curse may be,
And so she weaveth steadily,
And little other care hath she,
The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot:
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village-churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
An abbot on an ambling pad,
Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
Goes by to tower'd Camelot:
And sometimes thro' the mirror blue
The knights come riding two and two:
She hath no loyal knight and true,
The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
To weave the mirror's magic sights,
For often thro' the silent nights
A funeral, with plumes and lights
And music, went to Camelot:
Or when the moon was overhead,
Came two young lovers lately wed;
"I am half sick of shadows," said
The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
He rode between the barley-sheaves,
The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
And flamed upon the brazen greaves
Of bold Sir Lancelot.
A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
To a lady in his shield,
That sparkled on the yellow field,
Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
Like to some branch of stars we see
Hung in the golden Galaxy.
The bridle bells rang merrily
As he rode down to Camelot:
And from his blazon'd baldric slung,

A mighty silver bugle hung,
And as he rode his armour rung,
Beside remote Shalott.

All in the blue unclouded weather
Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather,
The helmet and the helmet-feather
Burn'd like one burning flame together,
As he rode down to Camelot.
As often thro' the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight glow'd;
On burnish'd hooves his war-horse trode;
From underneath his helmet flow'd
His coal-black curls as on he rode,
As he rode down to Camelot.
From the bank and from the river
He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
"Tirra lirra," by the river
Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom,
She made three paces thro' the room,
She saw the water-lily bloom,
She saw the helmet and the plume,
She look'd down to Camelot.
Out flew the web and floated wide;
The mirror crack'd from side to side;
"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,

The broad stream in his banks complaining,
Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse —
Like some bold seër in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance
Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot:
And as the boat-head wound along
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her name,
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near
Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, "She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace,
The Lady of Shalott."

ULYSSES

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Match'd with an agèd wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel: I will drink
Life to the lees: all times I have enjoy'd
Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Thro' scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea: I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart,
Much have I seen and known: cities of men,
And manners, climates, councils, governments, —
Myself not least, but honour'd of them all;

And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
As tho' to breathe were life. Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains: but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
  This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle —
Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labour, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
  There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:
There gloom the dark broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toil'd, and wrought, and thought with me —
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads — you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil:
Death closes all: but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.

The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:
The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Tho' much is taken, much abides; and tho'
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes: I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man —
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seem'd
To his great heart none other than a God!
I ask'd thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.

But thy strong Hours indignant work'd their wills,
And beat me down and marr'd and wasted me,
And tho' they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renew'd.
Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosen'd manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The Gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch — if I be he that watch'd —

The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimson'd all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,
Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kiss'd
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East:
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seest all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

CROSSING THE BAR

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place,
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812–1889)

Browning was almost an exact contemporary of Tennyson, born three years later and dying three years earlier. Like Tennyson, he was a man of upright character, deep religious earnestness, and cheerful optimism. Like Tennyson, also, he was always frank in facing the intellectual and spiritual problems of the age. Both poets are essentially wholesome in all their writings; both are distinctively modern in thought and poetic method; both were so fortunately situated as to be able to give their undivided attention to their work; and both, for nearly sixty years, labored untiringly and devotedly toward the realization of their art and its mission. But the parallel ends here, and a divergence commences which will explain why Browning, unlike his great contemporary, has never been favored by the many, though he is intensely admired by the few.

The genius of Browning is bold, independent, and vigorous, as his personality is robust, genial, and aggressive. Of smooth and graceful verse he is capable (witness his *Saul*), and he is capable also of lucidity; but he tends rather to that which is involved in conception and forceful and rugged in utterance. His mission was not to delight or soothe, but to arouse and intellectually to awaken. His aims are strikingly original, and his method no less so. In consequence, he has been condemned by many who simply do not take the trouble to understand him. As a thinker he is rapid and daring, wonderfully subtle and profound. His knowledge was broad, yet singularly recondite, — as, for instance, in relation to the music, painting, and sculpture of his beloved Italy. Unfortunately, with characteristic disregard of his reader's limitations, he had the habit of registering his thoughts just as he thought them; of jotting down allusions just as they occurred to him. The obscurity of Browning, moreover, is due not only to subtlety of thought and compression of phrase, but also, in no slight degree, to

his careless style of writing. Hence the demand for Browning societies and Browning cyclopædias, and hence the disfavor in which many hold the poet.

There is little doubt that Browning was ahead of his age, and that the common knowledge and appreciation of his work will gain as time passes. Some of his lyrics are almost perfect of their kind. His dramatic monologues show a power of character analysis equalled by few since Shakespeare. In mental force and directness he reminds one of Dryden at his best. His poems rarely yield their meaning on a single reading, but those who take the pains to study him seldom fail to derive an exhilaration and uplift which few poets are capable of imparting. Much of his poetry hinges on the relation of this life to the next. God, the freedom of the individual soul, and immortality, are the cardinal tenets of his faith. No English poet has coined into art a religious belief more strenuous and optimistic. Already ranked next to Tennyson in the field of nineteenth-century poetry, the day is perhaps not far distant when the consensus of opinion will place him beside Tennyson as one of the leading English poets; always, of course, inferior in technique, but superior in originality of thought, in interpretative and creative power.

1812–1846. — Browning was born in London in May, 1812. His father, a clerk in the Bank of England, was a man of considerable learning, as well as taste in matters of art and literature. The boy's education was received chiefly by private instruction at home, where his father's large library afforded him excellent opportunity for study. He was attracted successively by the works of Byron, Keats, and Shelley; and, at a very early age, commenced the making of verse on his own account. Unlike almost every other English man of letters, he attended neither Oxford nor Cambridge. Browning's first poem, *Pauline*, was written when he was not yet twenty years of age. The poem, though crude and difficult to understand, is important as the first step toward the fulfilment of the poet's definite determination to make his poetry a study of the life of the soul. Such a study was *Paracelsus* three years later, and such *Sordello* in 1840 — both of them characteristic of their author; but the latter, especially, nay unpardonably, obscure and, in many places, even unintelligible to the average or more than average reader. Between 1840 and 1846, many of Browning's best poems were written, among them *Pippa Passes*, the *Dramatic Lyrics*, and the *Blot i' the 'Scutcheon*. This series of poems made up some nine or ten small volumes, and were together known as *Bells and Pomegranates*.

1846–1861. — When Browning was thirty-four years old, he met Elizabeth Barrett, England's greatest poetess, who was then a confirmed

invalid. An attachment sprang up, and, under romantic circumstances, the two were married. They slipped away to Italy and made their home in Florence until the wife's death fifteen years later. Though much of Mrs. Browning's best work was done during this period, Browning himself published but two volumes, *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day*, 1850, and *Men and Women*, 1855. The latter is a collection of dramatic monologues — poems where the speaker is supposed to address an interlocutor, whose presence, however, is only inferred from the speaker's words. In this particular form of composition, Browning stands supreme.

1861–1871. — After his wife's death the poet returned to London, which was henceforth his home, save for occasional periods of residence in Venice. During the first ten years of this life in London he continued to write poems of a quality not inferior to those which he had written in Italy. The *Dramatis Personæ*, in subject and treatment, reminds the reader of *Men and Women*. The *Ring and the Book*, 1869, over twice as long as either *Paradise Lost* or the *Idylls of the King*, is thought by many to be his best, as it is certainly his most ambitious, work; but though lighted by golden shafts of poetry the wood is hard at times to see for the trees, so confused, indiscriminate, and repetitious are the details. The *Balaustion's Adventure*, 1871, is noteworthy as a delightful rendering of a noble Greek tragedy.

1871–1889. — The latter portion of Browning's life was even more busily employed than his earlier years. As he grew older, his poems became, unfortunately, more and more abstruse, his style more and more obscure. We could well spare many of his later poems, although the very last, *Assolando*, written when the poet was over seventy-five years of age, contains some lyrics equal to those of his best days. Browning died at Venice in 1889, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

That much of Browning's poetry is difficult cannot be denied. Still some of the poems are much easier to understand than others; and if they are read in such an order as takes this into account, a comprehension of the peculiarities of their author's style is much more easily acquired. The short poems included in this volume are among the simpler of his productions. At a later period the student may well supplement them by *Pippa Passes*, *The Blot i' the 'Scutcheon*, *Paracelsus*, *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *Caliban on Setebos*, *The Death in the Desert*, *Saul*, *Ferishtah's Fancies*, and many another.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

I

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!

II

And after April, when May follows,
And the white throat builds, and all the swallows!
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower
— Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent to the North-West died away;
Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;
Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar lay;
In the dimmest North-East distance dawned Gibraltar grand and gray;
"Here and here did England help me: how can I help England?" — say,
Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and pray,
While Jove's planet rises yonder, silent over Africa.

EVELYN HOPE

I

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!
Sit and watch by her side an hour.
That is her book-shelf, this her bed;
She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,
Beginning to die too, in the glass;
Little has yet been changed, I think:
The shutters are shut, no light may pass
Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

II

Sixteen years old when she died!
Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name;
It was not her time to love; beside,
Her life had many a hope and aim,
Duties enough and little cares,
And now was quiet, now astir,
Till God's hand beckoned unawares, —
And the sweet white brow is all of her.

III

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
What, your soul was pure and true,
The good stars met in your horoscope,
Made you of spirit, fire, and dew —
And, just because I was thrice as old
And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
Each was naught to each, must I be told?
We were fellow-mortals, naught beside?

IV

No indeed! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love:
I claim you still, for my own love's sake!

Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few:
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.

V

But the time will come, — at last it will,
When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
In the lower earth, in the years long still,
That body and soul so pure and gay?
Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
And your mouth of your own geranium's red —
And what you would do with me, in fine,
In the new life come in the old one's stead.

VI

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
Given up myself so many times,
Gained me the gains of various men,
Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope,
Either I missed or itself missed me:
And I want and find you, Evelyn Hope!
What is the issue? Let us see!

VII

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
My heart seemed full as it could hold;
There was place and to spare for the frank young smile,
And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
So, hush, — I will give you this leaf to keep:
See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
There, that is our secret: go to sleep!
You will wake, and remember, and understand.

MY LAST DUCHESS

FERRARA

THAT's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart — how shall I say? — too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace — all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men, — good! but thanked
Somehow — I know not how — as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame

This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech — (which I have not) — to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark" — and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
— E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

ANDREA DEL SARTO

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him, — but to-morrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,

This evening more than usual, and it seems
As if — forgive now — should you let me sit
Here by the window with your hand in mine
And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up to-morrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
To-morrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so —
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
— How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet —
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks — no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything, —
All in a twilight, you and I alike,
— You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone, you know), — but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.

How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example — turn your head —
All that's behind us! You don't understand
Nor care to understand about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door,
— It is the thing, Love! so such things should be —
Behold Madonna! — I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep —
Do easily, too — when I say perfectly
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
— Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive — you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat, —
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter) — so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed beating stuffed and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or whate'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.

The sudden blood of these men! at a word —
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain;
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world —" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.
('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art — for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put — and there again —
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right — that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it:
But all the play, the insight and the stretch —
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you!
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think —
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you — oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare —

Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged,
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self:
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat — somewhat, too, the power —
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look, —
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,
I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts, —
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,

To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know —
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of the grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was — to have ended there; then, if
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife" —
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's! — And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here — quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance, so lost, —

Is, whether you're — not grateful — but more pleased.
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,
The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love, — come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That Cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you — you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The gray remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more — the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them — that is, Michel Agnolo —
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? To-morrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand — there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same Cousin's freak. Beside,

What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The Cousin! what does he to please you more?

I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures — let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems to-night.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance —
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem,
Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo, and me
To cover — the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So — still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia, — as I choose.

Again the Cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

RABBI BEN EZRA

I

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand

Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half ; trust God : see all, nor be afraid !"

II

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars ;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all !"

III

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate ; folly wide the mark !
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

IV

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast ;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men ;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

V

Rejoice we are allied
To That which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive !
A spark disturbs our clod ;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

VI

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go !
Be our joys three-parts pain !

Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

VII

For thence, — a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks, —
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

VIII

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh hath soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test —
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

IX

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn?"

X

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw Power, see now Love perfect too:
Perfect I call Thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete, — I trust what Thou shalt do!"

XI

For pleasant is this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:

Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute, — gain most, as we did best!

XII

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh to-day
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry "All good things
Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

XIII

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

XIV

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

XV

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire-ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

XVI

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:

A whisper from the west
Shoots — "Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

XVII

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

XVIII

For more is not reserved
To man with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

XIX

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death, nor be afraid!

XX

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

XXI

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!

Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

XXII

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

XXIII

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

XXIV

But all, the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

XXV

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XXVI

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel

Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

XXVII

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

XXVIII

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

XXIX

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves,
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

XXX

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

XXXI

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who mouldest men ;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I — to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily — mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst :

XXXII

So, take and use Thy work :
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim !
My times be in Thy hand !
Perfect the cup as planned !
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same !

EPILOGUE

(TO ASOLANDO)

At the midnight in the silence of the sleep-time,
When you set your fancies free,
Will they pass to where — by death, fools think, imprisoned —
Low he lies who once so loved you, whom you loved so,
— Pity me ?

Oh to love so, be so loved, yet so mistaken !
What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly ?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless did I drivel
— Being — who ?

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
"Strive and thrive!" cry "Speed, — fight on, fare ever
There as here!" 20

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822–1888)

In our survey of Victorian poets we began with Macaulay, whose stirring verses are essentially "popular" and especially suited to the appreciation of the youthful and the average reader. We shall close the list with Arnold, who could not tolerate Macaulay, sneered at what he called his "pinchbeck *Lays of Ancient Rome*," and cared nothing for the average reader; who, indeed, perhaps more than any other English poet, appeals directly and almost exclusively to the cultivated taste of the educated class. As time goes on it seems more and more certain that Matthew Arnold is destined "to live" in the esteem of this growing and important body of readers. As to the style of his poetry, we may merely call attention to its intellectual, almost academic tone, its classic purity and restraint, its subtlety of thought and delicacy of feeling, for in many respects he is the most Greek of our modern poets.

A certain prevailing note in Arnold's poetry deserves a word of discussion. His mind was compounded of keen intellectuality on the one hand and intense spirituality on the other. He was unable to bring these two elements into solution, for his intellectual honesty refused to carry him to the heights where his desires and feelings pointed the way. Much of his poetry was consequently the expression of doubt — the earlier poems even of despair. He had little of the aggressive optimism which characterized Browning, whom he liked, and Tennyson, whom he vastly underrated. Neither had he any great measure of that trusting faith and spiritual insight which distinguished Wordsworth — the poet of all poets whom he sincerely admired and acknowledged as his master. His was rather a dignified, sweet, and mournful questioning of Providence, attended by a calm and ready resignation to the inevitable. Though of rich scholarship and active mind, he was not a constructive artist. He was rather an interpreter of other minds and phases of thought than a seer. Yet Arnold was distinctively a modern man who looked at life and its problems from a modern point of view. And though, as we have intimated, he often is doubtful of a satisfactory solution of these problems, it is none the less true that he everywhere insists on the necessity of an earnest, self-reliant endeavor to solve them.

Arnold devoted only the earlier years of his life to poetry; the later years were almost wholly given over to prose. While his poetry seemed to be an attempt to criticise life from the point of view of the feelings, his prose was a criticism of life from the point of view of intellect. The former is therefore marked by conflict and questionings; the latter by directness and decisiveness. Accordingly, whatever may be Matthew Arnold's ultimate reputation as a poet, his prose will undoubtedly entitle him to consideration as one of the most important figures in nineteenth-century criticism.

1822–1845. — Arnold was born on Christmas Eve, 1822, at Laleham, a little town some twenty miles west of London. His father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby, was a writer of no little prominence, and one of the most honored, best loved teachers the world has ever known. Young Arnold's early education was received largely under his father's eye at Rugby; and there in his eighteenth year he won a scholarship in Balliol College, Oxford. After four years' residence at the University, he was elected to a fellowship in Oriel — a distinguished honor which had also fallen to his father some thirty years before. His scholastic attainments, both from college training and from subsequent study, were of the highest order. Next after Milton and Gray he may be reckoned as perhaps the most learned of English poets.

1845–1857. — Shortly after obtaining his fellowship, Arnold left college. He taught Latin and Greek at Rugby for a time; then, in 1847, became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne — a position which he held for four years. His first volume of verse was published in 1849, when he was twenty-six years of age. Though this little book contained several of his best poems, — *The Forsaken Merman* and the *Sonnet on Shakespeare* among others, — it attracted almost no attention and was soon withdrawn from circulation. Three years later a second volume appeared, with like results, though it included such excellent representation of Greek thought as the *Empedocles on Etna*. The next year a third volume was published, containing, among other new poems, *Requiescat*, *The Scholar Gypsy*, and *Sohrab and Rustum*, the last of which is sometimes considered to be the author's masterpiece. But the prose essay which preceded this third volume, and gave utterance to Arnold's theories of poetry, was probably the most important of his writings so far, for it was the first of his long line of brilliant, critical prose works. In 1855 appeared *Balder Dead*, one of his longer and more highly polished poems. By this time, though his circle of readers was not large, his reputation as a poet was assured and led to his election, in 1857, to the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford.

Unlike most of the great poets of the century, Arnold was not solely a literary man. In 1851, the year of his marriage, he accepted from Lord Lansdowne an appointment as Inspector of Schools, and for thirty-five years gave himself up faithfully to the laborious duties of that position. He was not a man of means, and his literary productions were never popular enough to be especially remunerative; hence the moderate salary connected with his office was really a necessity. Though the routine of his position was often distasteful, he put his best efforts into his official duties, and is reckoned as one of England's foremost educational leaders.

1857–1888. — Arnold's chair at Oxford was not that of a resident professor. His compensation was small, but his duties were few. Although he held his professorship ten years, most of the time he could spare from his duties as School Inspector was spent in writing. His tragedy of *Merope*, "a Greek play in English dress," was published in 1858. His famous *Essays in Criticism* appeared in 1865. His volume of *New Poems*, two years later, almost the last of his poetical efforts, included *Dover Beach* and *Thyrsis*, the latter a lament called forth by the death of his friend Clough, and often reckoned among the great English elegies. For the remaining twenty years of his life, Arnold's work consisted almost entirely of prose essays in criticism, philosophy, and religion. He lectured in the United States in 1883, and again three years later, at which time he resigned the educational office he had held so long. His busy life was soon after suddenly ended by heart disease, March, 1888.

In selecting poems of Arnold for this book, we have, except in the case of *Dover Beach*, purposely avoided those which are most typical, — poems of the doubtful or sceptical mood, — and have chosen a few of the more attractive productions in lyrical strain. *Rugby Chapel* was a loving memorial to his father, written in 1857 — fifteen years after Thomas Arnold's death. The dates of the other poems have been given above.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

Come, dear children, let us away;
Down and away below!
Now my brothers call from the bay,
Now the great winds shoreward blow,
Now the salt tides seaward flow;
Now the wild white horses play,

Champ and chafe and toss in the spray.
Children dear, let us away!
This way, this way!

Call her once before you go —
Call once yet!
In a voice that she will know:
"Margaret! Margaret!"
Children's voices should be dear
(Call once more) to a mother's ear;
Children's voices, wild with pain —
Surely she will come again!
Call her once and come away;
This way, this way!
"Mother dear, we cannot stay!
The wild white horses foam and fret."
Margaret! Margaret!
Come, dear children, come away down;
Call no more!
One last look at the white-wall'd town,
And the little grey church on the windy shore;
Then come down!
She will not come though you call all day;
Come away, come away!

Children dear, was it yesterday
We heard the sweet bells over the bay?
In the caverns where we lay,
Through the surf and through the swell,
The far-off sound of a silver bell?
Sand-strewn caverns, cool and deep,
Where the winds are all asleep;
Where the spent lights quiver and gleam,
Where the salt weed sways in the stream,
Where the sea-beasts, ranged all round,
Feed in the ooze of their pasture-ground;
Where the sea-snakes coil and twine,
Dry their mail and bask in the brine;

Where great whales come sailing by,
Sail and sail, with unshut eye,
Round the world for ever and aye?
When did music come this way?
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, was it yesterday
(Call yet once) that she went away?
Once she sate with you and me,
On a red gold throne in the heart of the sea,
And the youngest sate on her knee.
She comb'd its bright hair, and she tended it well,
When down swung the sound of a far-off bell.
She sigh'd, she look'd up through the clear green sea;
She said: "I must go, for my kinsfolk pray
In the little grey church on the shore to-day.
'Twill be Easter-time in the world — ah me!
And I lose my poor soul, Merman! here with thee."
I said: "Go up, dear heart, through the waves;
Say thy prayer, and come back to the kind sea-caves!"
She smiled, she went up through the surf in the bay.
Children dear, was it yesterday?

Children dear, were we long alone?
"The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan;
Long prayers," I said, "in the world they say;
Come!" I said; and we rose through the surf in the bay.
We went up the beach, by the sandy down
Where the sea-stocks bloom, to the white-wall'd town;
Through the narrow paved streets, where all was still,
To the little grey church on the windy hill.
From the church came a murmur of folk at their prayers,
But we stood without in the cold blowing airs.
We climb'd on the graves, on the stones worn with rains,
And we gazed up the aisle through the small leaded panes.
She sate by the pillar; we saw her clear:
"Margaret, hist! come quick, we are here!
Dear heart," I said, "we are long alone;
The sea grows stormy, the little ones moan."

But, ah, she gave me never a look,
For her eyes were seal'd to the holy book!
Loud prays the priest; shut stands the door.
Come away, children, call no more!
Come away, come down, call no more!

Down, down, down!
Down to the depths of the sea!
She sits at her wheel in the humming town,
Singing most joyfully.
Hark what she sings: "O joy, O joy,
For the humming street, and the child with its toy!
For the priest, and the bell, and the holy well;
For the wheel where I spun,
And the blessed light of the sun!"
And so she sings her fill,
Singing most joyfully,
Till the spindle drops from her hand,
And the whizzing wheel stands still.
She steals to the window, and looks at the sand,
And over the sand at the sea;
And her eyes are set in a stare;
And anon there breaks a sigh,
And anon there drops a tear,
From a sorrow-clouded eye,
And a heart sorrow-laden,
A long, long sigh;
For the cold strange eyes of a little Mermaiden
And the gleam of her golden hair.

Come away, away children;
Come children, come down!
The hoarse wind blows coldly;
Lights shine in the town.
She will start from her slumber
When gusts shake the door;
She will hear the winds howling,
Will hear the waves roar.

We shall see, while above us
The waves roar and whirl,
A ceiling of amber,
A pavement of pearl.
Singing: "Here came a mortal,
But faithless was she!
And alone dwell for ever
The kings of the sea."

But, children, at midnight,
When soft the winds blow,
When clear falls the moonlight,
When spring-tides are low;
When sweet airs come seaward
From heaths starr'd with broom,
And high rocks throw mildly
On the blanch'd sands a gloom;
Up the still, glistening beaches,
Up the creeks we will hie,
Over banks of bright seaweed
The ebb-tide leaves dry.
We will gaze, from the sand-hills,
At the white, sleeping town;
At the church on the hill-side —
And then come back down.
Singing: "There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

RUGBY CHAPEL

NOVEMBER, 1857

Coldly, sadly descends
The autumn evening. The field
Strewn with its dank yellow drifts
Of wither'd leaves, and the elms,

Fade into dimness apace,
Silent; — hardly a shout
From a few boys late at their play!
The lights come out in the street,
In the school-room windows; — but cold,
Solemn, unlighted, austere,
Through the gathering darkness, arise
The chapel-walls, in whose bound
Thou, my father! art laid.

There thou dost lie, in the gloom
Of the autumn evening. But ah!
That word, *gloom*, to my mind
Brings thee back, in the light
Of thy radiant vigour, again;
In the gloom of November we pass'd
Days not dark at thy side;
Seasons impair'd not the ray
Of thy buoyant cheerfulness clear.
Such thou wast! and I stand
In the autumn evening, and think
Of bygone autumns with thee.

Fifteen years have gone round
Since thou arosest to tread,
In the summer-morning, the road
Of death, at a call unforeseen,
Sudden. For fifteen years,
We who till then in thy shade
Rested as under the boughs
Of a mighty oak, have endured
Sunshine and rain as we might,
Bare, unshaded, alone,
Lacking the shelter of thee.

O strong soul, by what shore
Tarriest thou now? For that force,
Surely, has not been left vain!

Somewhere, surely, afar,
In the sounding labour-house vast
Of being, is practised the strength
Zealous, beneficent, firm!

Yes, in some far-shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit in whom thou dost live —
Prompt, unwearied, as here!
Still thou upraisest with zeal
The humble good from the ground,
Sternly repressest the bad!
Still, like a trumpet, dost rouse
Those who with half-open eyes
Tread the border-land dim
'Twixt vice and virtue; reviv'st,
Succourest! — this was thy work,
This was thy life upon earth.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth? —
Most men eddy about
Here and there — eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Gather and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,
Striving blindly, achieving
Nothing; and then they die —
Perish; — and no one asks
Who or what they have been,
More than he asks what waves,
In the moonlit solitudes mild
Of the midmost Ocean, have swell'd,
Foam'd for a moment, and gone.

And there are some, whom a thirst
Ardent, unquenchable, fires,

Not with the crowd to be spent,
Not without aim to go round
In an eddy of purposeless dust,
Effort unmeaning and vain.
Ah yes! some of us strive
Not without action to die
Fruitless, but something to snatch
From dull oblivion, nor all
Glut the devouring grave!
We, we have chosen our path —
Path to a clear purposed goal,
Path of advance! — but it leads
A long, steep journey, through sunk
Gorges, o'er mountains in snow.
Cheerful, with friends, we set forth —
Then, on the height, comes the storm.
Thunder crashes from rock
To rock, the cataracts reply,
Lightnings dazzle our eyes.
Roaring torrents have breach'd
The track, the stream-bed descends
In the place where the wayfarer once
Planted his footstep — the spray
Boils o'er its borders! aloft
The unseen snow-beds dislodge
Their hanging ruin; alas,
Havoc is made in our train!
Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, are lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compress'd, we strain on,
On — and at nightfall at last
Come to the end of our way,
To the lonely inn 'mid the rocks;
Where the gaunt and taciturn host
Stands on the threshold, the wind
Shaking his thin white hairs —

Holds his lantern to scan
Our storm-beat figures, and asks
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?
Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves! we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripp'd, without friends, as we are.
Friends, companions, and train,
The avalanche swept from our side.

But thou would'st not *alone*
Be saved, my father! *alone*
Conquer and come to thy goal,
Leaving the rest in the wild.
We were weary, and we
Fearful, and we in our march
Fain to drop down and to die.
Still thou turnedst, and still
Beckonedst the trembler, and still
Gavest the weary thy hand.

If, in the paths of the world,
Stones might have wounded thy feet,
Toil or dejection have tried
Thy spirit, of that we saw
Nothing — to us thou wast still
Cheerful, and helpful, and firm!
Therefore to thee it was given
Many to save with thyself;
And, at the end of thy day,
O faithful shepherd! to come,
Bringing thy sheep in thy hand.

And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone;
Pure souls honour'd and blest

By former ages, who else —
Such, so soulless, so poor,
Is the race of men whom I see —
Seem'd but a dream of the heart,
Seem'd but a cry of desire.
Yes! I believe that there lived
Others like thee in the past,
Not like the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.

Servants of God! — or sons
Shall I not call you? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind,
His, who unwillingly sees
One of his little ones lost —
Yours is the praise, if mankind
Hath not as yet in its march
Fainted, and fallen, and died!

See! In the rocks of the world
Marches the host of mankind,
A feeble, wavering line.
Where are they tending? — A God
Marshall'd them, gave them their goal.
Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them, their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.
— Ah, keep, keep them combined!
Else of the myriads who fill

That army, not one shall arrive;
Sole they shall stray; in the rocks
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.

Then, in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine!
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.
Ye alight in our van! at your voice,
Panic, despair, flee away.
Ye move through the ranks, recall
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,
Praise, re-inspire the brave!
Order, courage, return,
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,
Follow your steps as ye go.
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,
Strengthen the wavering line,
Stablish, continue our march,
On, to the bound of the waste,
On, to the City of God.

DOVER BEACH

The sea is calm to-night.
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the straits; — on the French coast the light
Gleams and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night-air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanch'd sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar

Of pebbles which the waves draw back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

REQUIESCAT

Strew on her roses, roses,
And never a spray of yew!
In quiet she reposes;
Ah, would that I did so too!

Her mirth the world required;
She bathed it in smiles of glee.
But her heart was tired, tired,
And now they let her be.

Her life was turning, turning,
In mazes of heat and sound,
But for peace her heart was yearning,
And now peace laps her round.

Her cabin'd, ample spirit,
It flutter'd and fail'd for breath.
To-night it doth inherit
The vasty hall of death.

5. THE POETRY OF CHIVALRY

Under this heading we have included several of the most delightful of modern English poems. One of them is the work of an American — the only American poem in this volume. The others are the work of Tennyson, and form a part of the wonderful series which their author has grouped together as *Idylls of the King*. They are all derived from early Celtic legend, and have been preserved through British tradition and English literature for more than a thousand years. The following is a very brief account of the origin and history of the legends treated in these poems.

Sometime shortly before 1150 a Welsh priest, Geoffrey of Monmouth as he was called, put together in twelve short books of Latin prose what purported to be a history of the early kings of Britain (*Historia Regum Britanniæ*). Beside the stories of King Lear and of Locrine (father of the Sabrina of Milton's *Comus*), this "history" entered fully into an account of the more than half-legendary "King Arthur," who is fabled to have died about 550 A.D., or six hundred years before the time of Geoffrey. Geoffrey says that he derived his stories from earlier Celtic writers; he was certainly indebted to early Celtic tradition, perhaps of Brittany as well as of Wales and Ireland. This so-called *History* had scarcely been written before it was turned into French verse by a certain Geoffrey Gaimar, and in this way it passed over into France. Not more than five years elapsed when it was retranslated and added to by Wace, another poet of the Norman-French; and thus during the latter part of the twelfth century the story was constantly

enlarged and altered, in verse and in prose, by the writers of both England and the Continent. Among the additions of this period was that of Walter Map, a Welshman, who is supposed to have combined with the original Arthurian legend the legend of the Holy Grail.

So far the story had appeared only in the original Latin of Geoffrey, and in the French or Norman-French versions of his translators. But about 1205 an English priest named Layamon felt inspired to tell in his own language the story of those "who first had English land." Accordingly, from the translations of Wace and other Normans, as well as from Celtic legends and Teutonic sagas which he himself knew, he built up, in the purest of English verse, a wonderful poem of over thirty thousand lines. This poem he called the *Brut*, from the reputed founder of Britain, Brutus, great-grandson of Æneas. In this poem the original story gains numerous additions which, so far as known, had not before appeared in written form. Among these are the episodes of the founding of the Round Table, and of the mysteries attending the birth and the "passing" of Arthur.

From the first "King Arthur" proved the favorite of the many romantic tales which stirred the imagination and exercised the invention of French and Norman writers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The variations of the legend and the additions to it became almost numberless, yet, strange to say, it was nearly a hundred years after the time of Layamon before it again found its way into an English version. But this tardiness is at last well compensated for by the merits of the *Morte Darthur*. This was written by Sir Thomas Malory about 1470, and printed some fifteen years later as one of the hundred works which came from the press of Caxton. The book consisted of a translation of the various French legends of the Round Table and the combination of them in one splendid "prose-poem," couched in the richest and most melodious English. This work of Malory not only is important because it preserved to the English-speaking world the stories of Arthur and his knights; it is also, in its own right, probably the finest English literary production of the fifteenth century.

Since the time of Malory many poets have made use of the Arthurian story, chief among them Tennyson in his splendid *Idylls of the King*. But before we enter into an examination of the *Idylls*, we shall turn to an American poet, who, like Tennyson, has infused into this story of early chivalry a moral force and ethical significance which had little place with early English romance or early Celtic bard. The characters of the *Idylls of the King* are set "in a rich and varied landscape." The action is large, the actors many. To these stirring poems *The Vision of Sir Launfal* forms both a contrast and a supplement. Though not dealing with a hero of the Round Table or with the events of King

Arthur's reign, it is none the less a poem of chivalry in the truest and best sense of that word. We shall, therefore say something concerning its author, America's most representative man of letters, James Russell Lowell.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819–1891)

We have been discussing Matthew Arnold — poet, critic, teacher, man of public activities. We come now to the consideration of James Russell Lowell, also poet, critic, teacher, and man of affairs. Though the latter was no doubt the better balanced, the more wholesome, and the sunnier of the two, perhaps the more gifted in varied capability, the parallel between them is nevertheless striking and suggestive. Nearly twenty years ago and during the lifetime of both poets, Mr. Edmund Clarence Stedman, in his *Poets of America*, said: "Lowell and Arnold, poets nearly equal in years, both scholars, both original thinkers, occupy representative positions — the one in the Old England and the other in the New — which are singularly correspondent. Two things, however, are to be noted. The American has the freer hand and wider range as a poet. Humor, dialect verse, and familiar epistles come to him as naturally as his stateliest odes. Again, while both poets feel the perplexities of the time, Arnold's difficulties are the more restrictive of his poetic glow; with him the impediments are spiritual. With Lowell they are material, and to be overcome. Like Mr. Arnold, Lowell also feels the questioning spirit of our age of unrest; but his nature is too various and healthy to be depressed by it. The cloud rests more durably on Arnold. Lowell always has one refuge. Give him a touch of Mother Earth, a breath of free air, one flash of sunshine, and he is no longer a book man and a brooder; his blood runs riot with the spring; this inborn, poetic elasticity is the best gift of the gods. Faith and joy are the ascensive forces of song."

This parallel is noteworthy partly because of its aptness, partly because it suggests an answer to the query with which we are so familiar, "How do the best poets of our country compare in ability and achievement with the greater poets of England?" It is unquestionably true that America has as yet produced no poetic genius who can rank with the greatest among the masters of English poetry — no Chaucer nor Spenser, no Shakespeare nor Milton, no Wordsworth nor Tennyson. But it is no less true that our greater American poets have created a literature which is distinctive and representative; and that, measured by the very best of the second rank of English poets, their position is, to say the least, an honorable one. Matthew Arnold was a very distinguished representative of literary England. But we are undoubtedly

safe in saying that of the many points of likeness between Arnold and Lowell there are few in which the American is not the superior.

As to his American contemporaries, Lowell outranks them chiefly in the quality of many-sidedness. His place is very high whether he be judged as scholar, diplomat, critic, humorist, writer of brilliant and luminous prose, or poet thoroughly representative of the best that American culture has yet produced. But above and beyond all this he was a *Man*, a splendid type of all that is highest and noblest in American citizenship.

1819–1838. — James Russell Lowell was born February 22, 1819, just outside of Cambridge, Massachusetts, about a mile from Harvard University. His father, Charles Lowell, was for over half a century a Congregational minister in the West Church of Boston. Lowell was born and lived and died in a fine old country mansion called Elmwood, whose garden, meadow, spreading trees, and lilac hedges had no slight influence in arousing in the future poet a passionate love of nature. In his father's library was an excellent collection of standard literature, and there the future scholar first made acquaintance with the world of books. When fifteen years of age Lowell entered Harvard College, then an institution of only about two hundred and fifty students; and after an uneventful course of four years he took his degree in 1838. But though the young collegian was strikingly indifferent to the prescribed work of his curriculum, he must in some way have given evidence of the stuff of which he was made, for his friend, Dr. Edward Everett Hale, says of him thirty years later, "The year Lowell graduated we were as sure as we are now that in him was first-rate poetical genius, and that here was to be one of the leaders of the literature of the time."

1838–1848. — After his graduation Lowell studied law and was admitted to the bar. Discovering, however, that he had little taste for the legal profession, he soon abandoned it. About this time, 1841, appeared his first literary venture — a little volume of poems entitled *A Year's Life*. A second volume, which followed three years later, marks a distinct advance in his powers. This was the year also of his marriage to Maria White, a woman of noble character, who exerted no small influence over the young poet's early work. Four years later came another series of poems, *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, the amusing *Fable for Critics*, and the first instalment of the *Biglow Papers*, which had been for two years running anonymously in the Boston *Courier*. This clever satire was a half-indignant, half-humorous protest against the war with Mexico, and was at once recognized as unique, in fact, one of the most original poems ever written. Lowell was now thirty years

of age, and had at last caught the public ear. It is with the work of 1848 that his fame as a poet really began.

1848–1877. — During 1851 and 1852 Lowell spent a year and a half in Europe with his wife, whose health was failing and who died the next year. In 1855 the poet was appointed to the professorship in Harvard College of Belles-Lettres and Modern Language and Literature, a position which Longfellow had just vacated. After another visit to Europe to fit himself more fully for his new duties, Lowell settled down in 1856 to nearly twenty years of work as a Harvard professor. At the same time that he was carrying on his college courses, he was also occupying the post of editor — first of the *Atlantic Monthly* and then of the *North American Review*. To the latter were contributed many of his prose essays, most of them on literature and literary men. From 1862 to 1866 events connected with the Civil War called forth a second series of the *Biglow Papers*, grimmer in humor and more intense in feeling than his *Biglow Papers* of eighteen years before. In 1865 the poet recited at Harvard College the noble *Commemoration Ode*, not only one of his finest poems, but also one of the finest odes ever written. Other volumes of prose and poetry appeared during the next dozen years. At the end of this period Lowell gave up his work as editor and teacher and entered upon his career as public servant.

1877–1891. — From 1877 to 1880 the poet served as United States Minister to Spain, and from 1880 to 1885 as Minister to England. By his lively intelligence and ready tact, his fairness and breadth of mind, he gained extreme popularity in both countries. His ripe scholarship and social talents commended him especially to Englishmen; and it is safe to say that no American ambassador to the court of St. James has ever been more welcome. Mr. Lowell's second wife, whom he had married in 1857, died in England in 1885. This same year a change in political administration caused him to resign his post and return to the United States. The remaining years of the poet's life were spent in lecturing and writing, and in revising and republishing his works. His health, which had hitherto been robust, began to fail; but in spite of occasional periods of intense suffering he never lost that geniality which so endeared him to his friends. We have compared Lowell to Matthew Arnold and, indeed, they were alike in many ways. But as a vivid contrast to Arnold's philosophy of doubt we may quote a few words which Lowell wrote in a letter to a friend not long before his death: "I don't care where the notion of immortality came from. It is there, and I mean to hold it fast. There is something in the flesh that is superior to the flesh, something that can in finer moments abolish matter and pain. And it is to this we must cling." He died in August, 1891.

The Vision of Sir Launfal, written when Lowell was only twenty-nine years of age, is considered by many to stand at the high-water mark of American poetry. It is a poem especially worthy of our study, since it so admirably shows the genius of its author both as poet of nature and as poet of the philosophy of life.

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

Over his keys the musing organist,
  Beginning doubtfully and far away,
First lets his fingers wander as they list,
  And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:
Then, as the touch of his loved instrument
  Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,
First guessed by faint auroral flushes sent
  Along the wavering vista of his dream.

Not only around our infancy
Doth heaven with all its splendors lie;
Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not.

Over our manhood bend the skies;
  Against our fallen and traitor lives
The great winds utter prophecies:
  With our faint hearts the mountain strives;
Its arms outstretched, the druid wood
  Waits with its benedicite;
And to our age's drowsy blood
  Still shouts the inspiring sea.

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;
  The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
  We bargain for the graves we lie in;
At the Devil's booth are all things sold,

Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking;
No price is set on the lavish summer;
June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?
Then, if ever, come perfect days;
Then Heaven tries the earth if it be in tune,
And over it softly her warm ear lays:
Whether we look, or whether we listen,
We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;
Every clod feels a stir of might,
An instinct within it that reaches and towers,
And, groping blindly above it for light,
Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers;
The flush of life may well be seen
Thrilling back over hills and valleys;
The cowslip startles in meadows green,
The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,
And there's never a leaf nor a blade too mean
To be some happy creature's palace;
The little bird sits at his door in the sun,
Atilt like a blossom among the leaves,
And lets his illumined being o'errun
With the deluge of summer it receives;
His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,
And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;
He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest, —
In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high-tide of the year,
And whatever of life hath ebbed away
Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer,
Into every bare inlet and creek and bay;
Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it,

We are happy now because God wills it;
No matter how barren the past may have been,
'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;
We sit in the warm shade and feel right well
How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;
We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing
That skies are clear and grass is growing;
The breeze comes whispering in our ear,
That dandelions are blossoming near,
That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,
That the river is bluer than the sky,
That the robin is plastering his house hard by;
And if the breeze kept the good news back,
For other couriers we should not lack;
We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing, —
And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,
Warmed with the new wine of the year,
Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how;
Everything is happy now,
Everything is upward striving;
'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true
As for grass to be green or skies to be blue, —
'Tis the natural way of living:
Who knows whither the clouds have fled?
In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;
And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,
The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;
The soul partakes of the season's youth,
And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe
Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,
Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.
What wonder if Sir Launfal now
Remembered the keeping of his vow?

PART FIRST

I

"My golden spurs now bring to me,
And bring to me my richest mail,
For to-morrow I go over land and sea
In search of the Holy Grail;
Shall never a bed for me be spread,
Nor shall a pillow be under my head,
Till I begin my vow to keep;
Here on the rushes will I sleep,
And perchance there may come a vision true
Ere day create the world anew."
Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim,
Slumber fell like a cloud on him,
And into his soul the vision flew.

II

The crows flapped over by twos and threes,
In the pool drowsed the cattle up to their knees,
The little birds sang as if it were
The one day of summer in all the year,
And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees:
The castle alone in the landscape lay
Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray:
'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,
And never its gates might opened be,
Save to lord or lady of high degree;
Summer besieged it on every side,
But the churlish stone her assaults defied;
She could not scale the chilly wall,
Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall
Stretched left and right,
Over the hills and out of sight;
Green and broad was every tent,
And out of each a murmur went
Till the breeze fell off at night.

III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,
And through the dark arch a charger sprang,
Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight,
In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright
It seemed the dark castle had gathered all
Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall
In his siege of three hundred summers long,
And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf,
Had cast them forth: so, young and strong,
And lightsome as a locust-leaf,
Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,
To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

IV

It was morning on hill and stream and tree,
And morning in the young knight's heart;
Only the castle moodily
Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,
And gloomed by itself apart;
The season brimmed all other things up
Full as the rain fills the pitcher-plant's cup.

V

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,
He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still
Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn, —
So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

VI

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:
"Better to me the poor man's crust,
Better the blessing of the poor,
Though I turn me empty from his door;
That is no true alms which the hand can hold;
He gives nothing but worthless gold
Who gives from a sense of duty;
But he who gives but a slender mite,
And gives to that which is out of sight,
That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty
Which runs through all and doth all unite, —
The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms,
The heart outstretches its eager palms,
For a god goes with it and makes it store
To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

PRELUDE TO PART SECOND

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,
From the snow five thousand summers old;
On open wold and hill-top bleak
It had gathered all the cold,
And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;
It carried a shiver everywhere
From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare;
The little brook heard it and built a roof
'Neath which he could house him, winter-proof;
All night by the white stars' frosty gleams
He groined his arches and matched his beams;
Slender and clear were his crystal spars
As the lashes of light that trim the stars;
He sculptured every summer delight
In his halls and chambers out of sight;
Sometimes his tinkling waters slipt
Down through a frost-leaved forest-crypt,
Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees

Bending to counterfeit a breeze;
Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew
But silvery mosses that downward grew;
Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief
With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;
Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear
For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here
He had caught the nodding bulrush-tops
And hung them thickly with diamond-drops,
That crystalled the beams of moon and sun,
And made a star of every one:
No mortal builder's most rare device
Could match this winter-palace of ice;
'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay
In his depths serene through the summer day,
Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,
Lest the happy model should be lost,
Had been mimicked in fairy masonry
By the elfin builders of the frost.

Within the hall are song and laughter,
The cheeks of Christmas grow red and jolly,
And sprouting is every corbel and rafter
With lightsome green of ivy and holly;
Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide
Wallows the Yule-log's roaring tide;
The broad flame-pennons droop and flap
And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;
Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,
Hunted to death in its galleries blind;
And swift little troops of silent sparks,
Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,
Go threading the soot-forest's tangled darks
Like herds of startled deer.

But the wind without was eager and sharp,
Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,
And rattles and wrings

The icy strings,
Singing, in dreary monotone,
A Christmas carol of its own,
Whose burden still, as he might guess,
Was — "Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless!"

The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch
As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch,
And he sat in the gateway and saw all night
The great hall-fire, so cheery and bold,
Through the window-slits of the castle old,
Build out its piers of ruddy light
Against the drift of the cold.

PART SECOND

I

There was never a leaf on bush or tree,
The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;
The river was dumb and could not speak,
For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;
A single crow on the tree-top bleak
From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun;
Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,
As if her veins were sapless and old,
And she rose up decrepitly
For a last dim look at earth and sea.

II

Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,
For another heir in his earldom sate;
An old, bent man, worn out and frail,
He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;
Little he recked of his earldom's loss,
No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross,
But deep in his soul the sign he wore,
The badge of the suffering and the poor.

III

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare
Was idle mail 'gainst the barbèd air,
For it was just at the Christmas time;
So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,
And sought for a shelter from cold and snow
In the light and warmth of long-ago;
He sees the snake-like caravan crawl
O'er the edge of the desert, black and small,
Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,
He can count the camels in the sun,
As over the red-hot sands they pass
To where, in its slender necklace of grass,
The little spring laughed and leapt in the shade,
And with its own self like an infant played,
And waved its signal of palms.

IV

"For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms;"—
The happy camels may reach the spring,
But Sir Launfal sees only the grewsome thing,
The leper, lank as the rain-blanched bone,
That cowers beside him, a thing as lone
And white as the ice-isles of Northern seas
In the desolate horror of his disease.

V

And Sir Launfal said,—"I behold in thee
An image of Him who died on the tree;
Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,—
Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,—
And to thy life were not denied
The wounds in the hands and feet and side:
Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;
Behold, through him, I give to Thee!"

VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes
And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he
Remembered in what a haughtier guise
He had flung an alms to leprosie,
When he girt his young life up in gilded mail
And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.
The heart within him was ashes and dust;
He parted in twain his single crust,
He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,
And gave the leper to eat and drink:
'Twas a mouldy crust of coarse brown bread,
'Twas water out of a wooden bowl, —
Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed,
And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,
A light shone round about the place;
The leper no longer crouched at his side,
But stood before him glorified,
Shining and tall and fair and straight
As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate, —
Himself the Gate whereby men can
Enter the temple of God in Man.

VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine,
And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,
That mingle their softness and quiet in one
With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;
And the voice that was calmer than silence said,
"Lo it is I, be not afraid!
In many climes, without avail,
Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;
Behold, it is here, — this cup which thou
Didst fill at the streamlet for Me but now;

This crust is My body broken for thee,
This water His blood that died on the tree;
The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,
In whatso we share with another's need:
Not what we give, but what we share, —
For the gift without the giver is bare;
Who gives himself with his alms feeds three, —
Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me."

IX

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swound: —
"The Grail in my castle here is found!
Hang my idle armor up on the wall,
Let it be the spider's banquet-hall;
He must be fenced with stronger mail
Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

X

The castle gate stands open now,
And the wanderer is welcome to the hall
As the hangbird is to the elm-tree bough;
No longer scowl the turrets tall,
The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;
When the first poor outcast went in at the door,
She entered with him in disguise,
And mastered the fortress by surprise;
There is no spot she loves so well on ground,
She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;
The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land
Has hall and bower at his command;
And there's no poor man in the North Countree
But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

TENNYSON'S IDYLLS OF THE KING

In Professor Maccallum's valuable book on Tennyson's *Idylls of the King and Arthurian Story* we read: "In the *Idylls* is probably to be found the finest development that the cycle of Arthurian story has yet attained, or will for long attain. Perhaps it might even be said that they deliver the classic version of that story as a whole, and present it in the highest perfection of which it is capable. It may be maintained that its peculiar merits and defects correspond so closely with the inherent limitations and excellencies of Tennyson's genius that in him it found its unique predestined interpreter." Let us examine into the manner in which the poet serves as the nineteenth-century interpreter of mediæval chivalry.

Though Tennyson goes directly to Malory for his story, he exercises throughout the *Idylls* an artist's privilege of departing from the original whenever such departure seems to be to the advantage of his poem. There is no doubt that the subject of the legend appealed to the poet, largely on account of the moral significance which he was able to read out of it or infuse into it. Not that it is at all necessary or wise to regard the whole poem as an allegory, as some critics have tried to do, with each separate character or incident standing as the symbol of some abstract truth. Such a view of the *Idylls* would detract greatly from their simple epic interest. Still, in a general way, no doubt the *motif* underlying them, as Tennyson himself has said, is to depict "Sense at war with Soul." The guilty love of Lancelot and the Queen stands out as the main thread of the plot. In every one of the *Idylls* the blighting influence of their sin is felt. The conflict between evil and good is everywhere prominent. But though the Round Table is at last dissolved, the spiritual nobility of the king towers above the littleness and evil that surround him. We feel with Dr. van Dyke, "His life is not a failure, but a glorious success; for it demonstrates the freedom of the will and the strength of the soul against the powers of evil and the fate of sin."

Tennyson's interest in the Arthurian legend is seen as early as 1832, when in *The Lady of Shalott* he foreshadowed, in lyrical form, the theme afterward enlarged and modified into *Lancelot and Elaine*. Ten years later the *Morte d'Arthur* was published — a poem which later still, in unchanged form, appeared as the main portion of the *Passing of Arthur*, the last of the idylls. But the plan of the whole series was, then, evidently not yet conceived; and it was not till 1859 that the four idylls were published which formed its first instalment. In 1869 four more were published; afterward, at scattered intervals, still others, the last not appearing till 1885 — more than half a century after *The Lady of Shalott*.

A criticism of this group of poems is hardly needed. It easily ranks as one of the most charming series in English poetry. The exquisite character sketches, the lively human interest, the dramatic sequence of events, the heroic atmosphere, the delicate carved work peculiar to the poet's fancy, the splendid blank verse, — all contribute, with many other features of excellence, to establish for the series a position of surpassing distinction. The following is a full list of the idylls in the order in which they were finally arranged, together with the date of each: —

I. The Coming of Arthur, 1869.

II. The Round Table: (1) *Gareth and Lynette*, 1872; (2) *The Marriage of Geraint*, 1859; (3) *Geraint and Enid*, 1859; ((2) and (3) were originally combined as *Enid*); (4) *Balin and Balan*, 1885; (5) *Merlin and Vivien*, 1859 (first called *Vivien*); (6) *Lancelot and Elaine*, 1859 (first called *Elaine*); (7) *The Holy Grail*, 1869; (8) *Pelleas and Ettarre*, 1869; (9) *The Last Tournament*, 1871; (10) *Guinevere*, 1859.

III. The Passing of Arthur, 1869. (But mostly made up of *Morte d'Arthur*, 1842.)

The Epic, as finally completed, also included a *Dedication to Prince Albert* and an *Epilogue to the Queen*. The student will hardly find poetry more interesting — nay, fascinating — than that presented in these twelve idylls. In this book we are forced to confine ourselves to three, *Gareth and Lynette* and *Lancelot and Elaine*, respectively the first and the sixth of the "Round Table," and *The Passing of Arthur*, the last of the series. All twelve may be found, however, in editions of Tennyson's poems; and the student will find that at least the *Marriage of Geraint*, the *Geraint and Enid*, *The Last Tournament*, and *Guinevere* will equal in interest any of the three here given.

GARETH AND LYNETTE

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
"How he went down," said Gareth, "as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance, if lance
Were mine to use — O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,

Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to —
Since the good mother holds me still a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came
With Modred hither in the summer-time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
'Thou hast half prevail'd against me,' said so — he —
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is alway sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair
Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?" She laugh'd,
"Thou art but a wild-goose to question it."
"Then, mother, an ye love the child," he said,
"Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my well-beloved,
An 'twere but of the goose and golden eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:
"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the palm

A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendour sparkling from aloft, and thought
'An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings.'
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One that had loved him from his childhood caught
And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love,' and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his neck,
But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away."

To whom the mother said,
"True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,
And handed down the golden treasure to him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:
"Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he, or she,
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — *had* the thing I spake of been
Mere gold — but this was all of that true steel
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
That sent him from his senses: let me go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said:
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,

Albeit neither loved with that full love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often chance
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
Frights to my heart; but stay: follow the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;
So make thy manhood mightier day by day;
Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man."

Then Gareth: "An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a king, like ours.
The prince, his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the king
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd —
But to be won by force — and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the king:
That save he won the first by force, he needs
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —
Yea — some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one — they call'd her Fame; and one, — O mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you? — Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King —
Else, wherefore born?"

To whom the mother said:
"Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven King —
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King
When I was frequent with him in my youth,
And heard him kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,
Of closest kin to me: yet — wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly: "Not an hour,
So that ye yield me — I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd
The Idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be King save him who makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily: "Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother, — I demand."

And Gareth cried:
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!"

But slowly spake the mother looking at him:
"Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks

Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied:
"The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And, since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour,
When, waken'd by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds made
Melody on branch and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit of the high city flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way down
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
One crying, "Let us go no further, lord:
Here is a city of enchanters, built
By fairy kings." The second echo'd him,
"Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
To northward, that this king is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,
"Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
In his own blood, his princedom, youth, and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
And there was no gate like it under heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood: all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:
And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;

And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three Queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
Stared at the figures, that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings
Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl: they call'd
To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes
So long, that even to him they seem'd to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my sons?"

Then Gareth: "We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King: but these, my men, —
Your city moved so weirdly in the mist —
Doubt if the King be king at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy kings and queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer, playing on him
And saying: "Son, I have seen the good ship sail
Keel upward and mast downward, in the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air:
And here is truth; but an it please thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.

For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king
And fairy queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real;
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever."

Gareth spake
Anger'd: "Old master, reverence thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been
To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied:
"Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards?
'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion'?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie."

Unmockingly the mocker ending here,
Turn'd to the right, and past along the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said: "My men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:
Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere,
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms
Clash'd; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;
And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendour of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom — and look'd no more —
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears,
And thought, "For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I speak."
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights that ranged about the throne,
Clear honour, shining like the dewy star

Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King:
"A boon, Sir King! Thy father, Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with violence;
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce, and left us neither gold nor field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye? gold or field?"
To whom the woman weeping, "Nay, my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye."

And Arthur: "Have thy pleasant field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.
Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did
Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to him:
"A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead,
And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.
So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son."

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,
"A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall —
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag."

But Arthur: "We sit King, to help the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames;
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee hence —
Lest that rough humour of the kings of old
Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die."

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savour in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,
Delivering that his lord, the vassal king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin, Tristram, knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honour all the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. "The goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?"
For, midway down the side of that long hall,
A stately pile, — whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields, —
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named.
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall:
When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare, without a sign
Saving the name beneath: and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

"More like are we to reave him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,
As Mark would sully the low state of churl;
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever — craven — a man of plots,
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings —
No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied —
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!"

And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,
"A boon, Sir King," — his voice was all ashamed, —
"For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn
I seem — leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight."

To him the King:
"A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine."

He rose and past; then Kay, a man of mien
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen:

"Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some Abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog."

Then Lancelot standing near: "Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands,
Large, fair, and fine! — Some young lad's mystery —
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him."

Then Kay, "What murmurest thou of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery!
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
For horse and armour: fair and fine, forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day
Undo thee not — and leave my man to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage;
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
Would hustle and harry him, and labour him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,
And one would praise the love that linkt the King
And Lancelot — how the King had saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's —
For Lancelot was the first in tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-field —
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die" —
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud

That first they mock'd, but, after, reverenced him.
Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale
Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone,
Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end —
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.
He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee —
These news be mine, none other's — nay, the King's —
Descend into the city:" whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.
Make me thy knight — in secret! let my name
Be hidden, and give me the first quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:
"Son, the good mother let me know thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees:
"My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King:
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King:
"But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd:
"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?

Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day."
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:
"I have given him the first quest: he is not proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain."

Then that same day there past into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower:
She into hall past with her page and cried:

"O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,
Till ev'n the lonest hold were all as free
From cursèd bloodshed as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?"

"My name?" she said —
"Lynette, my name; noble; my need, a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,

And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stay'd
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with him
And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him thy chief man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow;
Then wed, with glory: but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd:
"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the realm. But say, these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
As have nor law nor king; and three of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and oftener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot."

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,
"A boon, Sir King — this quest!" then — for he mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull —
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King," and Arthur glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow. "Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight —
Go therefore," and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the May-white: she lifted either arm,
"Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave."
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring "kitchen-knave!"

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,
At one end one that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;
And out by this main doorway past the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A war-horse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had follow'd him:
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held

The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it, like a fuel-smother'd fire
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield
And mounted horse and grasped a spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,
"God bless the King, and all his fellowship!"
And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and past without the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,
His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms — the King hath past his time —
My scullion knave! Thralls, to your work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?
Begone! — my knave! — belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits they wander in his prime —
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,

Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave!
Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well — I will after my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire —
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said:
"Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great
And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword."
"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies:"
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Mutter'd the damsel: "Wherefore did the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than — O sweet heaven! O fie upon him! —
His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew —
And there were none but few goodlier than he —
Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, "Hence!
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.
And look who comes behind;" for there was Kay.

"Knowest thou not me? thy master? I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
"Master no more! too well I know thee, ay—
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall."
"Have at thee then," said Kay: they shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
"Lead, and I follow," and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke:

"What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master — thou! —
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! — to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before."

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd gently, "say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefor."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face."

"I shall assay," said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
And Gareth following was again beknaved:

"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves:
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the only way."

So till the dusk that follow'd even-song
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof a mere,
Round as the red eye of an Eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a serving man
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,
"They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere."
Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right the wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee."
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
"Lead, and I follow," Gareth cried again,
"Follow, I lead!" so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, black-shadow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here

Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light
Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye?" '

Gareth sharply spake:
"None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harbourage?'

Whereat the baron saying, "I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
Broke from Lynette: "Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave! —
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay — for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harbourage,
Well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers, where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,
'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
'Go therefore,' and so gives the quest to him —
Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began:

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life."

And Gareth said,
"Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
"Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she replied:

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee; then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:
"Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall?
For whom we let thee pass." "Nay, nay," she said,
"Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here
His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me," from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls

In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him shone,
Immingled with Heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him: "Wherefore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave."

Said Gareth: "Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge:
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest!
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own."

He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!"
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fall'n, "Take not my life: I yield."
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace."
She reddening, "Insolent scullion! I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favour ask'd!"
"Then shall he die." And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,
Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself, when I return, will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled;
Then when he came upon her, spake: "Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge,
The savour of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed;
I scent it twenty-fold." And then she sang,
"'O morning star' — not that tall felon there,
Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness

Or some device, hast foully overthrown, —
'O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me.'

"But thou begone, take counsel, and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a ford —
The second brother in their fool's parable —
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd, laughingly:
"Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest,
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,
'Guard it,' and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,
To worry, and not to flee; and — knight or knave —
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said, "but thou shalt meet thy match."

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,
Huge on a high red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun,
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower
That blows a globe of after arrowlets

Ten thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
"What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?"
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
"Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms."
"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and, vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met mid-stream; no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill; four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,
The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
"Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Lead, and I follow." Quietly she led.
"Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?"
"Nay, not a point; nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I saw it.

"'O sun'— not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness —
'O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of love-song or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance, —

"'O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

"'O birds that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare—
So runs thy fancy—these be for the spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight
That named himself the Star of Evening, stood.

And Gareth, "Wherefore waits the madman there
Naked in open dayshine?" "Nay," she cried,
"Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armour off him, these will turn the blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,
"O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?

Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?" and the damsel cried:

"No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star;
Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys."
Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
"Approach and arm me!" With slow steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the star of even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,
But up like fire he started: and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labour'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
"Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!"

He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamouring all the while,
"Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-knave —
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights —
Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied —
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round —
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin —
Strike — strike — the wind will never change again."
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armour off him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt.
"I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining ev'n his uttermost
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
"Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said:
"I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"'O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colours after rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me.'

"Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal

As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art."

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
"Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
The war of Time against the soul of man,
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.
Know ye not these?" and Gareth lookt and read —
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt —

"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES," — "HESPERUS" —
"NOX" — "MORS," beneath five figures, armèd men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
"Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
Who comes behind?"

For one — delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood —
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops —
His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
"Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend."
And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry:
But when they closed — in a moment — at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world —
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?"
"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —
Device and sorcery and unhappiness —
Out, sword; we are thrown!" And Lancelot answer'd, "Prince,
O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole
As on the day when Arthur knighted him."

Then Gareth: "Thou — Lancelot! — thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make — which could not chance —
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lancelot — thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant: "Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,
Who, being still rebuked, would answer still
Courteous as any knight — but now, if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon;
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and for ever."

And Lancelot said:
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise
To call him shamed who is but overthrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven; and thy good horse
And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,
And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, knight,
Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said:
"Ay, well — ay, well — for worse than being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks

And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find." And when they sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed:
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep —
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot," — and she clapt her hands —
"Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment."

Said Lancelot: "Peradventure he you name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-like," she said,
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all."

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the shield:
"Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence: let us go."

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho' summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the foe falls!"
An owl whoopt: "Hark the victor pealing there!"
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying:
"Yield, yield him this again; 'tis he must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield: wonders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
In having flung three: I see thee maim'd,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling the fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appal me from the quest."

"Nay, prince," she cried,
"God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day;
But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,
Monster! O Prince, I went for Lancelot first,
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man:
Thus — and not else!"

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than himself;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword, and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth: "Here be rules. I know but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way." "Heaven help thee!" sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, "There."
And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;
Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands and courtesy; but when the prince
Three times had blown — after long hush — at last —
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.
High on a night-black horse, in night-black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter — some ten steps —

In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn — advanced
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly:
"Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers
As if for pity?" But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher: a maiden swoon'd;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the terror, saw
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, "Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bade me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors;
They never dream'd the passes would be past."
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, "My fair child,
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bade me do it.
They hate the King and Lancelot, the King's friend;
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could be past."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance
And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being after all their foolish fears
And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in older times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then, fearing rust or soilure, fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in her nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God

Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not ev'n his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into colour with the crags:
And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
And Arthur came, and labouring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,
Saying: "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,
Once every year, a joust for one of these:

For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder!" Thus he spoke:
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen
When all were won; but, meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake — for she had been sick — to Guinevere:
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He, thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
However much he yearn'd to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon —
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, 'Lo, the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!'"
Then Lancelot, vext at having lied in vain:
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty; and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord —
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleam'd a vague suspicion in his eyes:
Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him — else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself; but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the colour: I am yours,
Nor Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.

And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honours his own word
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory; for to speak him true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself;
They prove to him his work: win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,

Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not. Some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —
I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat: "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre;
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."
Here laugh'd the father saying: "Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her thrice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went, and *if* I fought and won it —
But all was jest and joke among ourselves —
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, an if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to win;
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond, — as I hear,
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,

Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it; but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he;
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
O tell us — for we live apart — you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carv'd of one emerald center'd in a sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild white Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight cast him down, he laughs,
Saying his knights are better men than he —
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like; there lives
No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
"Save your great self, fair lord;" and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,
Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and colour of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep,
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood

Rapt on his face as if it were a God's.
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
That he should wear her favour at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,
I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favour at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favour of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those who know me, know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd: "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
What is it?" and she told him, "A red sleeve
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
But left her all the paler, when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said, laughing: "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your colour back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away: she stay'd a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy kindled with her brother's kiss —

Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off
Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labour'd and pray'd,
And ever labouring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away.
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering, "The great Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answer'd: "One,
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there — then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes

Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fall'n upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said:
"Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great:
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock, that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron — whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone —
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn
Favour of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we that know him, know."
"How then? who then?" a fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driv'n backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark,
And him that helms it; so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully:
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.
He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with, — drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the knights,

His party, cried, "Advance and take thy prize
The diamond;" but he answer'd: "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head."
"Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw —
Draw," — and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wild world's rumour by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,
Lords of waste marches, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day —
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.

I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honour: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took
And gave the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed The Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridd'n away to die?" So fear'd the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why, that like was he."

And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said: "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us,
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, ev'n the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.'"

Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,
Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field:
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,
"Thy hopes are mine," and saying that, she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,

And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out "Traitor!" to the unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat:
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He won."
"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side;" whereat she caught her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she swoon'd:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came
The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridd'n a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat: "Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble prince!
Here was the knight and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for: furthermore,
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And stay'd; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine:
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect — again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:
"Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height

Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and slow smiles, and golden eloquence
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him: "Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But, an ye will it, let me see the shield."
And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd:
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dream'd," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
Speak therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?"
Full simple was her answer: "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself —
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love."
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all others know,
And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve:
Would he break faith with one I may not name?

Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
Nay — like enow: why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times! — a thousand times farewell!
Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied,
"Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,

Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all
Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:
Till ev'n the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And, pledging Lancelot and the lily maid,
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood, and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said:
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,

"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest
As yon proud prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence,
I pray you." Then her father nodding said:
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it —
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's —
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride,
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers;
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,

How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,
"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
"Your prize the diamond sent you by the King."
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied, "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
At once she slipt like water to the floor.
"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;

"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colours on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
And being weak in body said no more,
But did not love the colour; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave. So day by day she past,
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,
Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best.

Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live:
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "Him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.

There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers: "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go to-day:" then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,
"Your love," she said, "your love — to be your wife."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
And Lancelot answer'd: "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,

Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face —
Alas for me then, my good days are done!"
"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!
This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self;
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age:
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Ev'n to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied,
"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will;"
And there that day remain'd, and toward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labour, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening, and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away,
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay,
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said: "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That had the poplar on it: there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'

And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
And there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say:
"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down;
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply:
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me, than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?"—
He meant to break the passion in her—"nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,

He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders; never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,
Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean, and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd,
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said — "ye never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat is gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died

For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.
And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me; he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her,
"Sister, farewell for ever," and again
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,

Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood —
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face
Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds: for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd, "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words:
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words
Perchance, we both can pardon: but, my Queen,

I hear of rumours flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect: let rumours be:
When did not rumours fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that, however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule:
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her she shines me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O as much fairer — as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds — hers not mine —
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will —
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they past away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd,
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said,
"He is enchanted, cannot speak — and she,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel, and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her:
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading, lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips,
Who had devised the letter, moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.

I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love:
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho' had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen
(Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm)
"Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding:

"Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down,
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her — then would I,
More specially were he, she wedded, poor,
Estate them with large land and territory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd, "O my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went

The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them, "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection said:

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long-practised knight,
And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honour and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,

Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot: "Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart —
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freëst," said the King.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook
Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself, "Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake

Caught from his mother's arms — the wondrous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the night —
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
I pray him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is:
Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain;
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.
My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death:
Nay—God my Christ—I pass but shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling, "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!"
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd,

"Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
For ever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise —
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
'Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move, than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,

Back to the sunset bound of Lyonnesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.
Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A deathwhite mist slept over sand and sea,
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and ev'n on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, labouring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or deathlike swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the North, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field
Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fall'n
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be King.
Behold, I seem but King among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My King,
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as King.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who sware my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me King.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for King.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fall'n in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

I perish by this people which I made, —
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but, let what will be, be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known:
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seëst, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,

Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fëalty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,
How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost for ever from the earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does.
What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumours of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying: 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honour and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence:
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Nor tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,
Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armèd heels —
And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon!

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,

Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three Queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three Queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she, that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest, laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls —
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the daïs-throne — were parch'd with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,

And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice
Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seëst — if indeed I go —
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt —
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag;
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried,
"He passes to be King among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but — if he come no more —
O me, be yon dark Queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Ev'n to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

ENGLISH POETRY

NOTES

[Abbreviations: **Dict.** (any unabridged dictionary, such as the *Century*, the *International*, or the *Standard*); **Cl. D.** (any good dictionary of classical mythology); **Cl. M.** (Gayley's *Classic Myths in English Literature.* Ginn & Company.)]

CHAUCER

THE PROLOGUE TO THE CANTERBURY TALES

The *Canterbury Tales* were written probably during the last twelve or fifteen years of Chaucer's life, *i.e.* between 1385 and 1400. It is impossible to conjecture the order in which they were written, or to make any definite guess as to just when the *Prologue* was composed. Though the *Prologue* undoubtedly appeared at a later date than some of the *Tales*, it is measurably certain that this date was not later than 1390. This would place it nearly one hundred years before the invention of the printing-press; over one hundred years before the discovery of America; nearly two hundred and fifty years before the time of Milton's earliest poems. Owing to the remote period of this composition, the student will naturally find certain difficulties which he does not meet in poetry of a later date. He will see constant allusion to beliefs and experiences, very real in Chaucer's time, but utterly foreign to the modern world. Perhaps in no way so well as by the study of this *Prologue* can we to-day enter into the life of the England of five hundred years ago. We make the acquaintance of a language which, in grammatical construction, in peculiarity of phrase, in form and meaning of word, transports us from the present to an antique world. If we would gain anything like the proper appreciation of Chaucer's verse, we must learn to read it aloud, pronouncing it as nearly as possible as he himself would have pronounced it. The following are a few rules which will apply to a solution of most of the difficulties to be met in mastering this pronunciation: —

1. **Vowels** were sounded in Chaucer's time very nearly as in Latin: **ā** long or **aa**, like *a* in *father*; **ă** short, like *a* in *what* (never like *a* in *cat*); **ē** long or **ee**, sometimes like *e* in *there* and sometimes like *a* in *fate*; **ĕ** short, like *e* in *met*; **ī** (or **y**) long or **ii**, like *i* in *machine*; **ĭ** (or **y̆**) short, like *i* in *pin*; **ō** long or **oo**, like *o* in *old* (**oo** never like *oo* in *pool*); **ŏ** short, like *o* in *obey* (never

like *o* in *not*) ; **ū** long, like the French *u* or German *ü* ; **ŭ** short, like *u* in *pun* (never like *u* in *but*). Final **e** is sounded like *a* in *Cuba*, and is generally pronounced in Chaucer, save when it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel or the aspirate *h*. *This fact must never be lost sight of in reading.* Indeed, as a general rule, *there are in Chaucer as many syllables to be pronounced as there are vowels or diphthongs.*

2. **Diphthongs**, or double vowels, were sounded as follows: **ai** and **ay**, like *ay* in *gay*, according to some editors; but, more probably, nearly like *i* in *pine;* **ei** and **ey**, like *ai*, — that is, like *i* in *pine*. (Some editors sound it like *e* in *there*, and still others like *ei* in *veil;* but both of these pronunciations are questionable); **au** and **aw**, like *ow* in *how;* **oi** and **oy**, like *oy* in *boy;* **ou** and **ow**, like *oo* in *pool* — sometimes like long *ō* gliding into *oo* (but never as in *house* or *how*); **eu** and **ew**, like *ū* long. (See above.)

3. **Consonants** were sounded as in modern English, except as follows: **c**, hard like *k*, except before *e* and *i*, and like *s*, before *e* and *i* (never like *sh* as in *ocean*); **f**, generally like *ff* in *off* rather than *f* in *of;* **g**, hard as in *go*, except before *e* and *i*, and soft as in *gin* before *e* and *i* ; **gh**, nearly like *ch* in the German word *auch;* **gn**, like *n*, the vowel preceding being pronounced long ; **ng**, like *ng* in *finger* — possibly sometimes like *ng* in *singing* (though Skeat does not admit this pronunciation); **r**, always rolled or trilled with the tip of the tongue ; **s** final, generally like *ss* in *hiss;* **s**, between two vowels in the middle of a word, generally like *s* in *his* (**s** is never pronounced like *sh* or *zh*); **t** (never like *sh* as in *nation*); **z** (never like *zh* as in *azure*).

These are practically all the rules which need be observed by the student; for further aid he must depend on the oral instruction of the teacher. The latter may indefinitely add to these simple rules by choosing from those given in the various editions of Chaucer. Though no one at the present time can more than approximately reach the exact pronunciation of the poet, still there will be found a charm in even this approximation which will amply justify the time spent upon it.

As a further aid to the student, we have indicated those accentuations of words (mostly of Latin and of Norman-French origin) which differ from present usage; and have italicized the vowels of those syllables which are not pronounced, the assumption being that, as in Latin, there is otherwise a syllable to be sounded for every vowel or diphthong.

The *Prologue* rhymes in couplets. Many of the couplets are "run-on"; *i.e.* the thought runs on from one couplet to another instead of being brought to a close at the end of the couplet, as is generally the case in Pope and other eighteenth-century poets who employ this form of verse (see Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, in this book). The metre is iambic pentameter, a large proportion of the lines, however, being hypercatalectic. See INTRODUCTION to this book, pp. lv, lxiv, lxviii. A knowledge of the metre will not infrequently aid the student in pronouncing difficult lines. Some lines are acephalous, *i.e.* lacking in the first unaccented syllable. See ll. 170, 247, 294, 384, 391, and INTRODUCTION, as above.

In the following notes, peculiarities of grammatical inflection, and other frequently recurring peculiarities, will be noted the first three times they occur.

1–18. 1. **Whan that.** The use of *that*, after such connectives as *when*, *if*, *because*, *after*, and the like, continued common until after the time of Shakespeare. **shoures.** Plurals end generally in *es*; sometimes in *s*. Observe how the original spelling of the poet's words seems to carry us back in feeling to his time and environment. As Mr. Ingraham says in his edition of the *Prologue*, "I see and hear in *shoures* drops of water falling from a darkened sky on field and river; while *showers* are predicted in the newspapers by those who know of the wind whence it cometh and whither it goeth." **sote**, sweet. For its more modern form, see 'swete,' l. 5. 2. **perced to the rote**, pierced to the root. The final *e* here is a sign of the dative. 3–4. **And bathed . . . flour.** "And bathed every vein (of the tree or herb) in such ('swich') moisture, by means of which quickening power, or vital energy ('vertú'), the flower is generated." (Skeat.) 5. **Zephirus.** For the gentle west wind, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.* p. 72. **eek**, also. 6. **Inspired**, in its radical sense (from Lat. *in* + *spiro*). **holt**, wood. 7. **croppes**, shoots, tree-tops. For form of plural see note on 'shoures,' l. 1. **yonge.** The *e* is used when the definite article precedes. 7–8. **yonge sonne . . . y-ronne.** The sun on crossing the equator at the March equinox (March 12, old style) entered *Aries*, or the Ram, the first sign of the Zodiac, out of which it passed on April 11, into *Taurus*, or the Bull. Hence it is the 'young sun,' as it has passed through only the first sign of the Zodiac, the Ram. The *April* sun has, moreover, completed that half-course which falls in the Ram (*i.e.* the last portion of the Ram which extended to April 11). From the mention of a definite date in a later part of the poem, we know that the sun had also run five days into the sign of the Bull, *i.e.* that it was now the 16th of April: see picture of Zodiac in unabridged dictionary. 8. **y-ronne.** For *i* or *y* as a sign of the past participle, see note on 'y-cleaped,' *L'Alleg.* (12). 9. **smale fowles**, little birds. Most adjectives, especially monosyllables, end in *e* when they modify plural nouns. 9. **maken**, and 10. **slepen.** Plural verbs end generally in *e*, sometimes in *en*. **ye**, eye. 11. **So . . . coráges.** Nature so spurs them on in their hearts ('corages,' from Lat. *cor*). For final *es* in 'corages,' see note on 'shoures,' l. 1, and 'croppes,' l. 7. Note the plural possessive (genitive) **hir**, and the plural objective (accusative) **hem.** 12. **longen.** For plural verb form, see note on 'maken' and 'slepen,' ll. 9, 10. **goon.** The infinitive ends generally in *e*, sometimes in *en* or *n*. 13. **palmers**, originally pilgrims who had gone to the Holy Land and had brought back a palm-branch, afterward borne as a sign of their journey. Later, as in Chaucer, the word seems to mean any pilgrim to foreign countries, who, renouncing home and property, spends his whole life in these wanderings. **seken.** For form of infinitive, see note on 'goon,' l. 12. 14. **ferne halwes**, distant holy ones, *i.e.* the shrines of saints. *Cf.* "All Hallow-e'en," All Saints' eve. **couthe**, known. **sondry**, various. 15. **shires**, county's. The possessive (genitive) singular of nouns

usually ends in *es*. 16. **Caunterbury**: see map of England. In Kent, fifty miles southeast of London. **wende**, go, as in the phrase "to wend one's way." 17. **blisful**, blessed. **martir**. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, murdered at the altar, in 1170, by four minions of Henry II, was canonized in 1173. **seke**, seek. This is the usual form of the infinitive: see note on 'goon,' l. 12. 18. **hem**: see note on 'hem,' l. 11. **holpen**, helped. The past participle of strong verbs ends in *en* or *e*. **seke**, sick.

19–34. 19. **Bifel**, it happened. **on a**, one. 20. **Tabard**: an inn in Southwark (now a part of London). The name was derived from the sign of the inn, a *tabard*, or kind of sleeveless coat. 21. **wenden**: see note on 'goon,' l. 12, and 'seken,' l. 13. 22. **corâge**: see l. 11. 23. **hostelrye**, inn. Look up derivation of *hotel*, *hospital*, *host*. 24. **Wel**, fully. 25. **by âventure**, by chance. **y-falle**: see note on l. 8. 27. **wolden**, wished: see note on 'maken' and 'seken,' ll. 9 and 10, and 'longen,' l. 12. **ryde**, an infinitive modifying 'wolden.' 29. **esed atte beste**, entertained in the best manner. 31. **So**, to such effect. **hem**: see note on 'hem,' ll. 11 and 18. **everichon**, every-each-one, *i.e.* every single one. 32. **hir**: see note on 'hir,' l. 11. **anon**, immediately. 33. **made forward** (A.-S. *fore-weard*, fore-ward, precaution), made an agreement. 34. **as**, where. Never in its present sense. It is generally preceded by *ther*. **I yow devyse**, I am telling you about, *i.e.* Canterbury.

35–42. 35. **natheles**, nevertheless. 36. **pace**, proceed. 37. **Me thinketh**: see note on *Comus* (482). **acordaunt**, according. 39. **me**: dative after the impersonal verb. 40. **whiche**, what kind of men. 41. **eek**: *cf.* l. 5.

43–78. 45. **ryden out**, to go on his knightly adventures. 46. **fredom**, liberality. 47. **lordes**, probably the king. For the ending, see note on 'shires,' l. 15. **werre** (dative), war; perhaps in France. 48. **ther-to**, besides. **ferre**, comparative of *fer*, far. 49. **hethenesse**, heathendom. *Cf.* Christendom. 51. **Alisaundre**, Alexandria in Egypt, won from the Mohammedans in 1365. 52. **the bord bigonne**, sat at the head of the table (at state dinners as a mark of the honor due to him). 53. **Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce**, above the representatives of all nations in Prussia. 54. **Lettow**, Lithuania, now divided between Russia and Prussia. **reysed**, made military expeditions. **Ruce**, Russia. 56. **Gernade**, Granada, in southern Spain. **eek**: *cf.* ll. 5 and 41. 57. **Algezir**, Algeciras, a city on the south coast of Granada. The knight had been at this siege, in 1344. Skeat suggests that the year of this story is 1386. From this we may estimate the knight's age. **riden**: see note on l. 45. **Belmarye**, Benmarin, a Moorish kingdom in northern Africa. 58. **Lyeys**, Ayas in Armenia, won from the Turks in 1367. **Satalye**, Adalia on the south coast of Asia Minor, also taken from the Turks in 1362. Observe that these are all Christian victories over the Mohammedans. 59. **Grete See**, the eastern Mediterranean. 60. **aryve**, disembarkation (arrival) of troops. 61. **mortal**, deadly (from Lat. *mors*, death). 62. **Tramissene**, Tremessen, a Moorish kingdom in northern Africa. 63. **In listes thryes.**

He had fought for his religion three times, in lists or personal combats, having been challenged, no doubt, by some Mohammedan knight. **ay**, always. **64. ilke**, same. **65. Somtyme**, once upon a time. **Palatye**, Palathia, in Anatolia (Asia Minor). **66. Ageyn another hethen in Turkye.** He had fought with the lord of Palathia, a Christian knight, against still another heathen in Turkey. **67. sovereyn prys**, the greatest reputation. **68. thogh that**: see note on 'whan that,' l. 1. **worthy . . . wys.** Though he was a bold and distinguished man ('worthy'), he was nevertheless prudent ('wys'). **70. vileinye**, ungentlemanly speech, showing low taste or breeding. **never, no, ne, no.** Explain the force of these double negatives, remembering that even as late as Shakespeare they did not constitute an affirmative. **71. no maner wight**, no man of any kind. **72. verray**, very. **parfit**, perfect. **gentil** (Lat. *gens*), of high birth and breeding. **73. array**, dress and equipment. **74. hors**, evidently plural, as indicated by the number of the verb and of the adjective. Some neuter nouns have the same form in both numbers. **gode**. For the plural form of the adjective, see note on l. 9. **he**, *i.e.* the Knight. **gay**, gayly dressed. **75. fustian**: see *Dict.* **gipoun**, a short, close-fitting coat, generally worn under armor. **76. bismotered**, soiled or stained as with blood or rust. **with his habergeoun**, from his coat of mail (A.-S. *heals-beorgan*, neck-protector). **77. y-come**: see note on ll. 8 and 25. **viage**, journey or travels. **78. wente for to doon**, on returning, immediately started out to 'do' or go on the pilgrimage which he had vowed to make.

79–100. The Squyer. **80. lovyere**, a lover, as in romances of chivalry. **bacheler**, aspirant for knighthood. *Cf.* the phrase "bachelor of Arts," and look up derivation. **81. lokkes crulle**, locks curled. **presse**, curling tongs, or some fourteenth-century substitute for them. **82. yeer**. For number, see note on l. 74. **83. evene**, proper, well proportioned. **84. deliver**, active. **85. chivachye**, a cavalry raid (Fr. *cheval*; Lat. *caballus*, horse). **86. Flaundres**, Flanders, a province now comprising portions of northern France and southern Belgium and Holland. **Artoys, Picardye**, Artois, Picardy, French provinces. **87. litel space**, limited time or opportunity. **88. lady**, some possessives (genitives) are uninflected. **89. Embrouded**, embroidered. **91. floytinge**, probably playing the flute, though some suggest "whistling." **95. coude endyte**, knew how to (from A.-S. *cunnan*, to know) compose. **96. Juste**, tilt or joust at tournaments. **purtreye**, portray, *i.e.* draw. **97. nightertale**, night-time. **99. servisable**, willing to be of service. **100. carf biforn**, carved in front of, or for.

101–117. The Yeman. **101. he.** Does this refer to the Knight or to the Squyer? **na-mo**: *cf.* 'na-more,' l. 98. **102. him liste** it pleased him to. **ryde.** For the infinitive ending, see note on l. 12. **104. A sheef of pecok-arwes**, a sheaf of arrows with peacock's feathers, much liked because of their gay appearance. **106. dresse his takel yemanly**: care for his arrows in a manner befitting a yeoman. **107. drouped noght with fetheres lowe.** He took such pains with his 'takel' that the feathers did not droop low, or get pressed out of shape. **109. not-heed**, a head cropped, and like

a nut. **110. coude**, knew. **111. bracer**, a leather guard for the arm. **112. bokeler**, a buckler, or small shield. **114. Harneised wel**: equipped well, as regards hilt, sheath, and the like. **115. Cristofre**, an image of St. Christopher worn as a brooch or charm against danger. (From a Greek word meaning the bearer of Christ: see back of Webster's *Dict.*, or *Century Dict. Proper Names*.) **shene**, bright or shining. **116. bawdrik**, a broad belt worn over one shoulder and under the opposite arm; a baldric. **117. forster**, a forester or huntsman. **soothly**, truly.

118–164. The Prioresse. **119. coy**, quiet. **120. seynt Loy**, St. Eligius or St. Eloi, a humble saint, who lived at the beginning of the seventh century. There have been many conjectures as to why the prioress invokes this particular saint. Some think it to mean that she swore not at all, since St. Eligius is said to have once refused to take an oath; or again, perhaps, she came from the district of St. Loye's in Bedford. **121. cleped**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (12). **123. Entuned**, intoned, or chanted. **semely**, becomingly. **124. fetisly**, properly, elegantly. **125. scole of Stratford-atte-Bowe**: the dialect of French which had grown up in England, or Anglo-French, which she had doubtless learned from the Benedictine nuns of Stratford-at-Bow, near London. **127. mete**, food or meals. **129. sauce**, broth or gravy. **130. carie**, carry to her mouth. **kepe**, take care. **131. fille**, should fall. **132. curteisye**, court manners. **ful moche hir lest**. Her delight or pleasure ('lest') was very much, etc. **134. ferthing**, farthing or a fourth, hence a very small portion or morsel. **136. mete**: *cf.* l. 127. **raughte**, reached. **137. sikerly**, securely, *i.e.* certainly. **disport**, readiness to be entertained or amused. **139. peyned hir**, she took pains. **countrefete chere**, imitate the appearance or manner. **140. to been estatlich of manere**, to be stately of manners or bearing. **141. digne** (from Lat. *dignus*), worthy. **reverence**, respect or esteem. **142. conscience**, sensitiveness. **144. if that**: see note on 'whan that,' l. 1. **145. deed or bledde**, dead or were bleeding. **146. houndes**, dogs (*cf.* Ger. *hund*). **147. wastel**, cake. **148. oon**, one. **hem**: *cf.* l. 11. **149. men**, one, anybody (*cf.* Ger. *man*). **smoot it with a yerde smerte**, struck it smartly ('smerte') with a stick ('yerde'). **150. conscience**: *cf.* l. 142. **151. semely**: *cf.* l. 123. **wimpel**, a covering for the neck, or for the neck and chin, worn by nuns. **pinched**, plaited. **152. tretys**, well proportioned. **eyen**, eyes. Some few plurals end in *en*. *Cf.* oxen. **153. ther-to**: see note on l. 48. **reed**, red. **154. sikerly**: see l. 137. **156. hardily**, same as 'sikerly,' l. 154. **157. fetis**, neat. *Cf.* l. 124. **war**, aware. **159. peire**, pair or set. **gauded al with grene**, having every eleventh bead a large green gaud, or gaudy, — the bead in the rosary at which the "*Paternoster*" is recited. **160. shene**: see l. 115. **161. crowned A**. The brooch which the prioress wore appears to have been a locket, rather than a clasp pin, and to have had the form of a capital A surmounted by a crown. **162. Amor vincit omnia**, the well-known quotation from Virgil. **163–164. Another nonne . . . Preestes three.** Take note that the second nun, or chaplain of the prioress, and the three attendant priests, bring the

number of characters mentioned thus far to eight. Chaucer's 'Wel nine and twenty,' l. 24, are really thirty, exclusive of the poet himself and Harry Bailey, the host of the Tabard.

165–207. The Monk. 165. **a fair for the maistrye**, a man who seemed likely to excel, or to receive promotion. 166. **out-rydere**, the officer of a monastery whose business it was to look after the outlying manors belonging to the order. **venerye**, hunting. 168. **deyntee** (Lat. *dignitas*), valuable. 170. **Ginglen**, jingling of the bells on the bridle. 172. **as**: see note on l. 34. **keper of the celle**, superior of the monastery. 173. **reule**: in apposition with *it* in the next line. **seint Maure** and **seint Beneit.** Benedict, the founder of the Benedictine order in the sixth century, and Maure, his disciple, laid down the oldest forms of monastic discipline in the church. **som-del streit**, somewhat strict, narrow. 175. **ilke**, same. **olde thinges pace**, old things pass by. 176. **And heeld after the newe world the space**, "held his course in conformity with the new order of things." (Skeat.) 177. **yaf nat of**, gave not for. **pulled hen**, a plucked hen — the value of which is assumed to be very small. 179. **recchelees**, heedless of the regulations of church discipline. 180. **waterlees**, out of water. 181. **this is . . . cloistre.** This line is evidently in explanation of l. 179. 182. **thilke**, that same. 183. **'And I seyde**, etc. Observe how the poet appears to draw out the monk by pretending to agree with his views. 184. **What**, why. **wood**, mad, crazy. 185. **to poure**, by poring. 186. **swinken**, toil. 187. **As Austin bit**, as St. Augustine bids. St. Augustine (fourth century), as well as St. Benedict (l. 173), taught that monks should be diligent, not only in study, but also in manual labor. 188. **Lat . . . reserved**, let St. Augustine keep his work to himself. 189. **pricasour**, hard rider. 190. **fowel**: *cf.* l. 9. 191. **Of priking**, in spurring; hard riding. 192. **lust**, desire or pleasure. 193. **seigh**, saw. **purfiled**, edged or fringed. 194. **grys**, a gray fur, very costly. 198. **balled**, bald. 199. **anoint**, anointed. 200. **in good point** (Fr. *en bon point*, — embonpoint), in good condition, meaning about the same as 'full fat.' 201. **eyen**: see note on l. 152. **stepe**, bright. 202. **That stemed as a forneys of a leed**, that glowed as a furnace under a caldron (of lead). 203. **His botes souple**, his boots soft and pliable. **greet estat**, fine condition. 205. **for-pyned goost**, ghost wasted away by torment. 207. **berye.** Observe how portraits of the characters are linked together by the division of the couplet between them. *Cf.* 269, 270; 387, 388; 541, 542.

208–269. The Frere. 208. **wantown**, lively. 209. **limitour**, a mendicant friar, who had a definite limit assigned to him in which he might solicit alms. **solempne** (Lat. *solemnis*), pompous or self-satisfied. 210. **ordres foure.** The four orders of the mendicant friars were the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and the Augustinians. **can**, knows. 211. **daliaunce and fair langage**, entertaining and flattering talk. 214. **post**, as we now say "a pillar of the church." 216. **frankeleyn**, a wealthy landholder; a sort of country squire. **over-al**, everywhere. 217. **worthy**: see note on l. 459. 220. **licentiat**, a friar licensed by the pope to hear confessions,

grant absolution, or administer penance — in all cases independently of the local curate or parish priest, whose powers were more restricted. *Cf.* l. 219. **223. yeve** (same as 'yive,' l. 225), give. **224. as**: see note on l. 34. **wiste to han**, knew ('wiste') that he would gain. **pitaunce**, literally, mess of victuals. **225–232. For . . . freres**: *cf.* ll. 184–188. In both passages Chaucer with sly humor and pretended seriousness reflects the process by which his characters reason. **227. yaf**, past tense of 'yeve' or 'yive.' **he dorste make avaunt**, he (the friar) dares make his boast. **230. may**, can. **him sore smerte**, though it pains him sorely. **232. Men moot**: one ought to. For 'men,' see note on l. 149. **233. His tipet was ay farsed**, his cape was always stuffed. **234. yeven**: see note on 'goon,' l. 12. **236. rote**, some kind of a stringed instrument, perhaps a sort of guitar. **237. Of . . . prys**, *i.e.* in the singing of ballads he utterly (or absolutely) bore away (or took) the prize. **238. His nekke whyt**, etc. Notice Chaucer's *naïveté*. He is restricted by no set rules of poetic art. Whether consciously or unconsciously, he seems to pass, in his descriptions, from one point to another, with a child's simple delight at finding new things to see. Thus, in successive lines, his 'frere' sings ballads, has a white neck, is athletic, fond of conviviality, self-seeking. **241. everich**: see note on 'everichon,' l. 31. **hostiler**, the keeper of a 'hostelrye': *cf.* l. 23. **tappestere**, barmaid. The masculine form was tapster. **beggestere** (242) is likewise the feminine of beggar. **242. Bet**, better (adv.). **lazar**, leper (from *Lazarus*). **243. swich**: *cf.* l. 3. **244. as by his facultee**, considering his abilities. **245. seke**: *cf.* l. 18. **246. honest**, seemly or becoming. **avaunce**, advance one. **247. poraille**, poor people. **249. over-al**: see l. 216. **as**: see note on l. 34. **251. vertuous**, efficient in his undertakings. **253. sho**, shoe. **254. In principio**, from *John I*, 1. *In principio erat verbum*, evidently a part of his religious ministrations; or, perhaps, to impress his hearer with his knowledge of Latin. **255. ferthing**: see l. 134. **256. purchas**, the profits of his begging. **rente**, income. **257. And . . . whelpe**, "And he could romp about exactly as if he were a puppy dog." (Skeat.) **258. love-dayes**: days appointed for settling disputes out of court and by an umpire — in this case the friar. **260. cope**, a cloak worn by priests. **262. semi-cope**, a short 'cope,' or cape. **263. presse**, mould. **264. lipsed, for his wantownesse**, lisped in affectation. **269. cleped**: *cf.* l. 121.

270–284. The Marchant. **271. mottelee**, motley, a many-colored suit. **272. Flaundrish**, Flemish. **273. fetisly**: *cf.* l. 124. **274. resons**, opinions. **solempnely**: see 'solempne,' l. 209. **275. Souninge . . . winning**, always harping on his increasing profits. **276. were kept**, *i.e.* were guarded, kept open. **for any thing**, at any cost. **277. Middelburgh**, a port on an island in the Netherlands. **Orewelle**, the former name of an English port exactly opposite Middelburg. The merchants' ships travelled in the pirate-infested waters between these two ports. **278. Wel . . . selle**. He knew how to sell to advantage in various money markets the foreign coins (*sheeld*, a French coin) which he had accumulated in the course of his business. **279. well**

his wit bisette, used his wits to advantage. 280. **wiste**: *cf.* l. 224. **wight**, person: *cf.* l. 71. 281. **estatly**, discreet. **governaunce**, the management of his business. 282. **chevisaunce**, arrangements for borrowing. 284. **noot**, know not.

285–308. 285. **clerk.** This clerk (scholar) of Oxford was an aspirant for the priesthood. In Chaucer's time the word clerk meant simply *scholar*. Look up its derivation and trace its history to its present meaning. **Oxenford.** The form of the word suggests its possible derivation. For another conjecture, see note on *Lycidas*, l. 103. 286. **y-go**, gone. 288. **he**, the scholar. **I undertake**, I venture to say. 289. **ther-to**: *cf.* ll. 48, 153. 290. **overest courtepy**, uppermost short cloak. 291. **benefice**: see *Dict.* under the definition which has to do with the church. 292. **office.** A secular calling, such as offered by medicine or law, was often taken up for a time by the clergy of the Middle Ages. 293. **For him was lever have**, he would liefer (more gladly) have. 296. **fithel or gay sautrye**, fiddle or gay psaltery. 297. **al be**, although: *cf.* modern *albeit*. **philosophre**, Chaucer is here making a play on the word. Other than the meaning as already applied to the clerk is the meaning *alchemist* — one who has "found the philosopher's stone." This our Oxford scholar was not, Chaucer says, for, if he could *make* gold, l. 298 would not be true. 299. **hente**, get. 302. **hem**: *cf.* l. 11. **scoleye**, attend school. 303. **cure**, thought or care (from Lat. *cura*). 304. **o**, one. 305. **in forme and reverence** in precise and dignified manner. 306. **hy sentence**, lofty significance. 307. **Souninge in**, tending to: *cf.* l. 275.

309–330. The Sergeant of the Lawe. 309. **war**, wary. **wys**: *cf.* l. 68. 310. **parvys**, a church porch, probably of St. Paul's, where, it is said, lawyers used to meet for consultation. 312. **reverence**, dignity. 314. **Justyce in assyse**, a judge sent into the country to hold court (assizes). 315. **patente**, letters patent, or the official document of the king. **pleyn commissioun** (Lat. *plenus*), full authority. 318. **purchasour**, conveyancer (see *Dict.*). **no-wher noon**: see note on l. 70. Observe that 'noon' does not mean *known*. 319. **fee simple**, the most absolute form of ownership or possession of landed property. **in effect.** This seems to mean that the law sergeant could so cleverly, in his conveyancing, remove, or seem to remove, defects in title and other limitations of absolute ownership, that the deed, as he would hand it over, would practically seem to give possession in 'fee simple'; and finally (320) that the conveyance could not be invalidated ('infect'). 321–322. **No-wher . . . was.** Note how the lawyer delights to "bustle around" to indicate how busy a man he is. 323. **In termes**, in the exact words, *verbatim*. **caas**, cases; for number, see note on l. 74. **domes**, decisions. 324. **William**, the Conqueror, who reigned from 1066 to 1087. 325. **endyte**: *cf.* l. 95. **make a thing**, *i.e.* draw up a legal document. 326. **pinche at**, *i.e.* find fault with. 327. **coude**: see l. 95. 328. **medlee cote**, a coat of mixed color. 329. **Girt . . . smale**, encircled by a girdle of silk, having upon it small ornaments or bars.

331–360. The Frankeleyn: see note on l. 216. 332. **dayes-ye**: *cf.* 'ye,'

l. 10. This is the derivation of daisy. 333. **complexioun,** temperament. **sangwyn,** ardent or hopeful. Some prefer to interpret this line literally, making 'sangwyn' mean ruddy (from Lat. *sanguis,* blood). 334. **by the morwe,** in the morning. **sop,** bread or cake dipped in some liquid. 335. **delyt,** pleasure. **wone,** habit, wont. 336–338. **Epicurus . . . parfyt.** He was a 'son' (*i.e.* true disciple) of Epicurus, a Greek philosopher (342–270 B.C.), who was of the opinion that pleasure was the *summum bonum.* 340. **Seint Julian,** the patron saint of hospitality. 341. **after oon,** after one standard, *i.e.* the best. 342. **envyned,** stocked with wine. **no-wher noon:** see note on l. 318. 343. **bake:** see note on 'holpen,' l. 18. 345. **It snewed,** it abounded. 347. **After,** in accordance with. 348. **mete:** see l. 127. **soper** (supper), drink. 349. **mewe,** coop in which fowls were fattened. 350. **breem,** bream (see *Dict.*). **luce,** pike. **stewe,** a small pond in which fish were kept to supply the table. 351. **Wo was,** as we now say, "Woe be to." **but-if,** unless. **sauce:** *cf.* l. 129. 352. **Poynaunt,** pungent or biting. **gere,** utensils. 353. **table dormant.** Permanent tables on legs were now supplanting boards laid across trestles, which had been previously used. The Frankeleyn had such a table and kept it set, thus showing his hospitable nature. 355. **sessiouns,** sittings held by the justices of the peace. **lord and sire,** the presiding officer. 356. **knight of the shire,** representative of the county ('shire') in parliament. 357. **anlas,** a short, two-edged dagger. **gipser,** a pouch or purse. 359. **shirreve,** shire reve, chief magistrate of the shire. *Cf.* word sheriff. **countour,** an auditor of accounts. *Cf.* the modern comptroller. 360. **vavasour,** a sub-vassal, next in dignity to a baron.

361–378. The Haberdassher, or dealer in small wares; the Carpenter; the Webbe, or weaver; the Dyere; the Tapicer, or upholsterer. They are all, evidently, men of ability and standing in the community, as well as leading members of the various trade guilds to which they belong. 363. **o liveree,** one livery; the distinctive badge of the trade association or fraternity of which these men were members. 365. **hir gere apyked was,** their dress was adorned. 366. **y-chaped,** plated. 368. **every-deal,** every part. 369. **fair burgeys,** fit citizen. 370. **To sitten . . . deys,** to sit on a dais in a guild hall, *i.e.* to be the head of his guild. 371. **Everich:** *cf.* l. 241. **can,** knows. 372. **shaply,** fit. 373. **catel,** property: *cf.* the modern chattels and cattle (which in early ages formed a large part of a man's property). **rente:** see l. 256. 374. **wel:** see l. 24. 375. **elles,** else, otherwise. 376. **y-clept:** see note on *L'Alleg.* (12). **"madame,"** which title would belong to them if their husbands were aldermen. 377. **And . . . bifore,** and go before all the rest to vigils. A vigil was the watch kept on a festival eve, like that of St. John, when the people would meet in the church yard for revelry. The ladies of the gentry preceded the others, and had their mantles ostentatiously carried with them ('royalliche y-bore,' l. 378) by their servants.

379–387. The Cook. 379. **for the nones,** for the nonce, *i.e.* for then once, for that occasion. 380. **mary-bones,** marrow-bones. 381. **poudre-marchant tart,** a kind of tart flavoring powder. **galingale,** a sort of spice-

like root. **383. coude**: see l. 95. **sethe**, boil. **384. mortreux**, kind of stew or thick soup. **385. greet harm**, a pity. **386. shine**, shin. **mormal** (Fr. *mortmal*, Lat. *mortuum malum*, dead sore), cancer. **387. blank-manger**, a kind of fricassee, made of fish or fowl, etc., with a white sauce. For suggestion on this line, see note on l. 238.

388–410. The Shipman. **388. woning**, dwelling. **389. woot**, know. **Dertemouth**, Dartmouth, an important port in Chaucer's time, in Devonshire. **390. rouncy**, farm horse. **as he couthe**, as best he could. Being a sailor he knew little of horses. **391. falding**, a coarse cloth. **392. laas**, lace or cord. **394. hote somer**: perhaps any 'hot summer'; or, as some think, the especially hot seasons of 1351 or 1370. **395. good felawe**, as we say "jolly good fellow." **396. draughte**, cask. **y-drawe**, drawn, *i.e.* stolen. **397. From Burdeux-ward**, from-ward, *i.e.* from the direction of: *cf.* to-ward, originally also thus separated; also *cf.* l. 793. **whyl that**: *cf.* 'whan than,' l. 1. **chapman**: see note on Burns's *Tam o' Shanter* (1). **sleep**, a form of the past tense; also *slepte*. **398. Of nyce . . . keep**, he was not troubled with conscientious scruples. **399. hyer hond**, as we say, "upper hand." **400. By water . . . lond**, threw them overboard to get home as best they might, as he would express it; really, to drown. **401. craft**, skill. **402. bisydes**, beside, or all around him. **403. herberwe**, harbor. **lodemenáge**, art of pilotage: *cf.* lode star. **404. Hulle**, Hull in Yorkshire, England. **Cartáge**, Carthage. **405. wys**: see l. 68. **to undertake**, in his undertakings. **408. Gootlond**, Gotland, an island in the Baltic. **Finistere**, Finisterre, a cape in western Spain. **409. cryke**, a creek having a harbor. **Britayne**, Brittany. **410. y-cleped**: *cf.* l. 376. **Maudelayne**. It is interesting to know that there has been found this name of a ship, entered in 1386 among the Custom-house records of Dartmouth, still preserved. This may throw some light on the date at which the *Prologue* was composed.

411–444. The Doctour. **411. Phisyk** (413, 'phisik'), physic, medicine in general. **414. astronomye**, astrology. In the Middle Ages the position of sun, moon, and planets, in relation to one another, was thought to have an important bearing on proper medical treatment. As these astronomical conditions changed from hour to hour, so must the treatment change with them. **415–416. He kepte . . . magik naturel.** By his knowledge of 'natural magic,' or the phenomena of nature, he kept the treatment of his patient from hour to hour in conformity with the conditions mentioned above. **417–418. wel . . . pacient.** He could, moreover, make waxen images and treat them instead of his patient. If the patient did not recover when the images were treated, it merely proved that they had not been made at the right time. Hence the doctor's art largely consisted in his ability to predict or choose ('fortunen') the right ('ascendent') moment, according to astrology, for treating the images. **420. hoot, cold, moiste, drye.** These were, according to mediæval theories, the four humors, the proper proportions of which were essential to the health of the human body. Disease ('maladye') lay in an excess or defect of some one of these humors, and was

treated accordingly. **421. engendred**: *cf.* l. 4. **423. cause** and **rote** (root) are nominative absolutes before the participle 'y-knowe': *cf.* ablative absolute in Latin. **424. bote**, remedy. **426. letuaries**, electuaries or syrups, as distinguished from **drogges** (drugs), powders, or dry medicines. **427–428. For ech . . . biginne.** Each had long been serviceable to the other. The druggist recommends the physician; the physician makes his patients patronize the druggist. **429. Esculapius**, god of medicine, son of Apollo: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.* pp. 72, 130. **430–434. Deiscorides . . . Gilbertyn.** These are the authors of Greek, Arabian, Moorish, and English text-books on medicine used by physicians of the Middle Ages. Dioscorides, Rufus, and Galen were Greeks, about the second century; Hippocrates ('Ypocras') was a Greek of the fifth century. Haly, Serapion, Rhasis, Avicenna, Averroes, and Damascenus were Arabian physicians, living from the ninth to the twelfth century. Constantine was a Moor of the eleventh century. Bernard was a Frenchman of Chaucer's time. Gilbertine and Gatesden were Englishmen of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, respectively. **439. sangwin and pers**, red and sky-blue. **440. taffata and sendal**, thin silks. **441. esy of dispence**, economical. **442. pestilence.** Skeat gives as dates of pestilence in England 1348, 1349, 1362, 1369, and 1376. The doctor had made money in these pestilences, and purposed to keep it. His outlay was only for the rich dress that his position demanded of him. **443–444. For . . . special.** One of the most witty touches of the poem. Gold in some liquid form was considered a valuable medicine. Hence, with scientific enthusiasm (?), this doctor was collecting gold. Pronounce 'cordïal' and 'specïal' as trisyllables.

445–476. The Good Wyf of Bathe. **445. Good wyf**, the mistress of a household — a woman of independent fortune. **of bisyde**, from the vicinity of. **446. som-del**, somewhat, some deal: *cf.* the expression, a great deal. **scathe**, too bad. **447. haunt**, skill. **448. Ypres and Gaunt.** Ypres and Ghent, cities of Flanders, were noted for their cloth manufactories. **450. offring.** Gifts of alms or offerings were taken up by the giver and laid upon the altar. In taking these forward, worshippers were expected to observe the proper order of precedence. The Wife of Bathe, because of her position, was usually given first place, and was very angry at any one who might presume to go before her. **453. coverchiefs**, kerchiefs, or coverings for the head. (Fr. *chef*, from Lat. *caput.*) **ground**, texture. **454. ten pound.** The ornaments upon these kerchiefs made them heavy. The words 'I dorste swere' show that Chaucer is playfully exaggerating the weight. **457. streite**, tightly. **moiste**, supple. **459. worthy.** This word as used by Chaucer suggests both respectability and wealth: *cf.* l. 217. **460. chirche-dore.** In the Middle Ages the church porch was often the place of the marriage ceremony. **461. Withouten other companye**, besides other suitors. **462. as nouthe** (now then), at present. The parenthetical expression is suggestive of Kipling's "But that's another story." **463. thryes**, thrice. **465. Boloigne**, Boulogne, to see an image of the Virgin, often visited by pilgrims. **466. Galice at seint Jame**, Galicia, in northwestern Spain, where there was a

famous shrine of St. James. **Coloigne,** Cologne, the reputed burial-place of the three Wise Men of the East. **467. coude,** knew : *cf.* use in l. 95. **468. Gat-tothed,** having the teeth far apart. The origin of 'gat' is uncertain, *gap*, *gate*, and *goat* having all been suggested by different editors. **soothly for to seye,** to tell the truth. Note the poet's pity for her misfortune, and *cf.* l. 446. **469. amblere :** ambler, an easy-going horse. **470. Y-wimpled :** see l. 151. **471. bokeler :** see l. 112. **targe :** see *Dict.* **472. foot-mantel.** This seems to be a riding skirt of some kind, reaching to the feet. **474. carpe,** talk or chat; not in the present sense of finding fault. **475. Of remedyes,** modifies 'carpe.' The relative *which* is understood after 'remedyes.' **476. coud- . . daunce,** knew the old game: see ll. 460–461.

477–528. The poure Persoun. One of the finest characters in English poetry : *cf.* the parson in Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* (137–192). **478. Persoun of a toun,** country parson or parish priest. **480. clerk :** see l. 285. **481. wolde,** desired to. **482. parisshens,** parishioners. **485. y-preved,** proved. **ofte sythes,** ofttimes. **486. Full looth . . . tythes.** He was very loath to excommunicate ('cursen') anybody for not paying his tithes. For 'tithes,' see *Dict.* **487. yeven :** *cf.* l. 234. **out of doute,** without doubt : *cf. Merchant of Venice*, I, 1 (21). **489. offring,** the contributions he had received : *cf.* l. 450. **substaunce,** his income from his benefice. **490. han suffisaunce,** have sufficient, or all he desired. **492. lafte nat,** neglected not. **for,** on account of. **493. meschief,** misfortune. **494. ferreste,** farthest. **much and lyte,** great and small. **497. wroghte and taughte.** He "practised what he preached." **498. gospel :** see *Matthew* v. 19. **tho,** those. **499. figure** (accented on last syllable), figure of speech. What figure is it? Explain it. **ther-to :** see l. 48. **502. lewed,** ignorant, uneducated; hence layman, since learning was largely confined to the clergy. **503. take keep,** take heed, *i.e.* stop to think about it. **504. dirty,** the reading of Skeat's text. **507–511. He . . . withholde.** It was a custom among many country priests to sublet their benefices at a profit to themselves; and then either to attach themselves to some religious brotherhood by which they might be supported and kept away from their duties ('withholde'), or to get a lucrative "job" in some London church (such as St. Paul's) at singing masses for the founders of the chantries. **508, 509. And leet** (left), **And ran.** Supply 'nat' (not) with each verb. **510. chaunterye,** chantry: see *Dict.* **513. wolf.** Explain the figure. **516. despitous,** oversevere, contemptuous, despiteful. **517. daungerous,** domineering, cold. **digne,** haughty, repellent. **518. discreet and benigne,** tactful and kind. **519. fairnesse,** his own righteous (fair) life. **521. But,** unless. **523. snibben** (snub), rebuke, reprove. **for the nones,** for the nonce, as the occasion demanded. See note on l. 379. **524. trowe,** trow : see *Dict.* **525. wayted after,** expected, looked for (*i.e.* from other people). **526. Ne . . . conscience,** he did not set up for himself a conscience, ever calling attention to its own holiness, *i.e.* did not wrap himself up in a cloak of sanctity.

529–541. The Plowman. **529. Plowman,** a poor farmer. No one

who reads the description of this humble but pure-souled man and of his brother, 'the poure Persoun,' can for a moment believe that Chaucer was irreligious or a scoffer at religion. It is the personal selfishness and self-indulgence of the monk, the friar, the summoner, and the pardoner which he is satirizing, rather than the religion of which they were unworthy representatives. (*who*) **was his brother.** This relationship is interesting as showing the frequently humble origin of the secular priesthood of Chaucer's time. 530. **That hadde . . . fother,** who had drawn ('y-lad') many a cart-load ('fother') of manure. 531. **swinker,** laborer: see 'swinken,' l. 186. 534. **thogh him gamed or smerte.** Some take this to mean simply "in joy or woe"; others, "though his piety advanced or retarded his worldly interests." Which seems the more plausible interpretation? 533–535. **God loved . . . him-selve:** see *Mark* xii. 33. 536. **ther-to:** see l. 48. **dyke,** make ditches. **delve:** see *Dict.* 537. **wight:** see *Dict.* 539. **tythes:** *cf.* l. 486. 540. **swink:** *cf.* l. 188. **catel:** see l. 373. 541. **tabard:** see l. 20. **mere.** To ride upon a mare was not considered dignified, at least for people of fashion. For the incomplete couplet, see note on l. 207.

542–544. In these lines the poet sums up the remaining characters. 542. **Reve.** The reve (A.-S. *geréfa*, an officer) was a kind of private bailiff or steward of some nobleman, and overseer of his estate. **Millere.** The miller was a characteristic figure of the day, when each man took his own grist of grain to the mill to be ground into the flour needed in the household. He is a sort of comic character in early literature — a typical rascal. 543. **Somnour.** A summoner, or apparitor, was the messenger or officer who served the legal papers summoning delinquents to appear before the ecclesiastical courts. **Pardoner,** a seller of indulgences, or "absolution from the censure and public penance of the church." (Webster's *Dict.*) 544. **Maunciple.** The steward or caterer on whom devolves the task of purchasing provisions for a college, an inn of court, etc.: see Inns of Court in *Dict.* **na-mo:** *cf.* ll. 98 and 101.

545–566. The Miller: see note on l. 542. 545. **carl,** fellow: see churl in *Dict.* **for the nones:** see ll. 379 and 523. The phrase seems here a mere expletive, with no particular meaning; such a phrase as "for this gear" found frequently in Shakespeare. 547. **proved wel,** was easily proved true. **over-al:** see l. 216. 548. **ram,** a common prize in wrestling matches. 549. **a thikke knarre,** a thick-set fellow. 550. **nolde** (ne-wolde), not be willing to. **of,** off. **harre,** (its) hinges. 551. **at a renning.** This feat seems rather incredible, considering that the doors of that time were decidedly substantial affairs. 554. **cop right,** very top. 557. **nose-thirles** (nose-drills), nostrils. 558. **bokeler:** *cf.* l. 112. 559. **forneys,** furnace. 560. **jangler,** a babbler or idle talker. **goliardeys,** a buffoon, a teller of low stories. 561. **that,** the subject of his babbling. **harlotryes,** coarse or ribald jests. 562. **tollen thryes.** When the miller received the grain for grinding he was accustomed to take four or five per cent of it, as a toll. This miller would steal part of it, besides taking three times his proper toll. Remember that *corn* in England

is a generic name for wheat, barley, rye, etc. **563. thombe of gold.** Two explanations have been suggested: (1) that his thumb, as it rubbed the meal against his finger, was so sensitive that he could detect its quality by touch; and (2) that the term is a joke based on the old proverb, — "Every honest miller has a golden thumb." **pardee**, originally an oath (Fr. *par dieu*); but later, simply indeed, truly. **566. And . . . towne.** Thus the miller and his bagpipe conducted this odd cavalcade out of London. The bagpipe is not, as many think, a native Scottish instrument.

567–586. The Maunciple: see note on l. 544. **567. temple.** The Inner Temple and Middle Temple are lawyers' quarters in London, built on the site of an old monastic establishment of the Knights Templars, called the Temple. **568. achatours**, purchasers. **569. vitaille**, food, victuals. **570. by taille**, on credit, the account being originally scored by cutting notches in a piece of wood: see derivation and history of tally in *Dict.* **571. Algate**, always. **wayted**, watched. **achat**, purchasing: *cf.* 'achatours,' l. 568. **572. ay biforn**, always before or ahead of other purchasers. **574. lewed**: *cf.* l. 502. **wit**, shrewdness. **pace**, surpass. **577. curious**, skilful. **581. propre good**, on his own private ('propre') means or property: *cf.* goods. **582. but**: see l. 521. **wood**: see l. 184. **583. scarsly**, economically. **as him list desire**, as it pleases him (the steward) to desire. **584–585. And able . . . happe.** Besides his duties as steward or trustee, the lawyer would be able to help in the law cases of a whole county. **586. Sette hir aller cappe**, set the caps of them all. This phrase may mean that the maunciple was sharp enough to overreach or cheat these learned masters; or that he outdid them in being a better maunciple than any of them could have been, notwithstanding their qualifications to be stewards of a great estate. Which interpretation is preferable?

587–622. The Reve: see note on l. 542. **587. colerik**, choleric or irascible. **590. His top . . . biforn**, The top of his head was docked in front ('biforn') after the fashion of a priest's tonsure. **592. Y-lyk**, like. **y-sene**, to be seen, visible. **593. coude**: see l. 95. **gerner**, garner or granary. **594. auditour**, auditor: see *Dict.* **on him winne**, get the better of him, *i.e.* by proving his accounts to be incorrect. **597. neet**, cattle: *cf.* "neat's tongue," *Merchant of Venice*, I, 1; and "neat's leather," *Julius Cæsar*, I, 1. **dayerye**, dairy. **598. hors**: see note on l. 74. **stoor**, farm stock. **600. And . . . rekening**, According to contract he had been handing in his accounts. **602. Ther . . . arrerage**. No one could show that he had embezzled any of his lord's money: *cf.* l. 594. By twice suggesting this fact, and hinting at the extent of the reeve's private fortune (l. 609), the poet indicates his suspicions. **603. baillif**, perhaps an understeward. **herde**, herdsman. **hyne**, hind, farm laborer. **604. sleighte**, trickery. **covyne**, deceit. **605. adrad**, afraid. **606. the deeth**, probably the pestilence: see note on l. 442. **woning**, dwelling. **609. astored prively**, secretly stored or furnished with wealth. **610–611. His lord . . . good.** He could craftily please his lord by giving or lending ('lene') him

of his own (the lord's) property which he (the reeve) had previously purloined. **612. thank, cote, hood,** in return for this supposed favor. **613. mister,** trade. **614. wrighte,** workmen. **615. stot,** small horse or nag. **616. pomely,** dappled. **highte,** was called. **617. surcote,** overcoat. **pers:** see l. 439. **619. Northfolk,** Norfolk. **which:** which and who were used interchangeably until after Shakespeare. **620. Bisyde:** see l. 445. **621. Tukked . . . aboute:** with a cord or girdle around his loose coat, like a friar. **622. And ever . . . route.** Was this owing to his slow horse, or on account of unsociability?

623–668. The Somnour: see note on l. 543. **624. cherubinnes face,** cherubs being represented as fat, round, and rosy. **625. sawcefleem,** red and pimpled. **narwe,** narrow. **626. And quyk . . . sparwe,** the reading of Morris's text. **627. scalled browes:** scabby, or scurvy black brows. **piled berd,** thin and straggling beard. **629. litarge,** litharge or lead monoxide. **630. Boras,** borax. **ceruce:** ceruse, a cosmetic containing white lead. **oille of tartre,** cream of tartar. **632. whelkes,** pimples or blotches. **633. knobbes,** large pimples. **636. wood:** *cf.* ll. 184 and 582. **639. termes,** terms or Latin phrases, probably learned out of the legal papers which he served as summoner. **643. Can clepen "Watte,"** can call out Walter (as a parrot of to-day would cry "Poll"). **644. grope,** test him in any other point. **645. philosophye,** learning. **646. "Questio quid iuris,"** The question (is) what law? This is one of the 'termes,' l. 639. **647. gentil harlot,** good-natured rascal. **kinde,** genial. **650. good felawe,** a boon companion. **wikked syn.** The reading is from Morris's text. **651. atte fulle,** entirely. **652. pulle.** Secretly he could pluck a finch, an early English expression, meaning he could "cheat a greenhorn." **653. o-wher,** anywhere. **655. erchedeknes curs,** excommunication from the Archdeacon: *cf.* 'cursen,' l. 486. **656. But-if:** see l. 351. **657. For . . . be.** The Somnour, who, from his official position, pretends to know all about such things, drops a hint to his friend, that the threat of excommunication and the 'helle' to which it consigns one, is simply a means of extorting money from him against whom this is threatened. **659–662. But . . . significavit.** Chaucer is undoubtedly sincere in his denunciation of this teaching of the Somnour. Every guilty man, he says, should dread for himself ('him') excommunication, and the writ of excommunication (beginning "*significavit nobis venerabilis pater*," etc.), for this ('curs') is just as surely death to the soul as absolution ('assoilling') is its salvation: see note on l. 529. **662. war him,** let him beware of. **663. In daunger,** in his control or authority. **at his owene gyse,** after his own fashion. **664. younge girles,** young people of either sex (a meaning now obsolete). **665. hir:** see note on l. 11. **reed,** adviser. **666. gerland.** Skeat thinks this garland to be not an ivy wreath, as is generally explained, but a large hoop decorated with ribbons and roses. **667. ale stake,** also according to Skeat, is a stake projecting horizontally from the side of an inn, and is intended as a place on which the garland shall be hung. **668. A bokeler . . . cake.** Observe how much suggestion, as to

the character of the Somnour, Chaucer gets into this one line. Also notice the absence of regular order of description here and elsewhere : see note on l. 238.

669–714. The Pardoner : see note on l. 543. 670. **Rouncival,** the Hospital of the Blessed Mary of Rouncyvalle in London. 672. **Com hider, love, to me.** Evidently a popular song of the day, but rather oddly chosen for a churchman. Observe how 'Rome' must have been pronounced to allow it to rhyme with 'tō' me.' 673. **stif burdoun,** a deep bass accompaniment. 676. **stryke of flex,** hank of flax. 677. **ounces,** strands. 679. **colpons** (*cf.* coupons), shreds. **oon and oon,** one by one. 681. **trussed,** packed. 682. **Him thoughte** : *cf.* methought, and see note on l. 37. **jet,** fashion, style. 683. **Dischevelee.** We can picture the thin, straight, wax-colored hair blowing in every direction. 685. **vernicle** : a small copy of the vernicle, or St. Veronica's handkerchief, preserved at St. Peter's. The pardoner had undoubtedly secured this token on his recent visit to Rome : see Veronica in *Dict.* 687. **Bret-ful,** brimful. 691. **his . . . bare.** This reading is from Skeat's text. 692. **of his craft** : *cf.* l. 401. **Berwik into Ware,** Berwick in the extreme north of England to Ware in the south, *i.e.* all England : *cf.* the expression "from the Atlantic to the Pacific." 694. **male,** bag or 'wallet' (ll. 681 and 686). **pilwe-beer,** pillow case. 695. **lady,** the Virgin Mary. For form of possessive, see note on l. 88. 696. **gobet,** a small fragment. 698. **hente,** took, enlisted as a disciple : *cf.* l. 299. 699. **croys of latoun,** cross of latten, a kind of brass much used in making church utensils. **ful of stones,** set with precious stones, though probably imitation. 700. **pigges bones,** which he evidently was exhibiting as those of some saint. There is no doubt that Chaucer wished to portray this pardoner as a cheat and impostor. This, however, does not justify critics in assuming that Chaucer was in any sense contemptuous of the Church or its worthy representatives. 702. **person,** same as 'persoun,' l. 478. **up-on lond,** in the country. 703. **Up-on a day,** in one day. 704. **tweye,** two. 705. **japes,** tricks. 706. **He . . . apes.** He made dupes of both parson and people. 708. **ecclesiaste** : see the noun ecclesiastic in *Dict.* 709. **rede,** interpret or explain. 710. **alderbest,** best of all. 712. **moste,** had to, must. **affyle his tonge,** polish up his language. 713. **coude** : see l. 95.

715–724. 716. **Thestat,** the estate : *cf.* 'of what degree,' l. 40. **tharray,** the array : *cf.* l. 41. **the nombre** : see note on ll. 163–164. 719. **highte** : see l. 616. **Belle,** evidently another inn in Southwark. 721. **baren,** bore or conducted. **us** : the personal pronoun used for the reflexive. **ilke** : *cf.* l. 175. 723. **viage** : *cf.* l. 77.

725–746. 726. **narette** (*ne-arrette*), ascribe not to. **vileinye** : see l. 70. 727. **Thogh that** : *cf.* 'How that,' l. 721, 'Why that,' l. 717. See note on 'whan that,' l. 1. 728. **chere,** behavior. 729. **proprely,** just as they said them. 731. **Who-so . . . man,** whosoever undertakes to tell a story impersonating or in the character of ('after') any particular man. 732. **moot** : *cf.* l. 232. 733. **Everich a,** same as 'everich,' l. 241. **charge,**

the task which he has taken upon himself, *i.e.* of impersonating. **734. Al**, same as 'al be,' l. 297. **large**, coarsely. **736. feyne thing**, invent things other than really happened. For number of *thing*, see note on l. 74. **738. He moot . . . another**, He ought not to choose his words, but should say one as readily as he would another. **740. vileinye**: *cf.* l. 726. **741. who-so can him rede.** Chaucer, who presumably could not read Greek, is doubtless quoting from a Latin writer on Plato. **742. The wordes . . . dede.** The words must correspond to, or be kindred ('cosin') to, the thing described ('dede'). **743–746. Also . . . understonde.** "For the sake of dramatic interest the poet does not make his pilgrims tell their stories in the order of their precedence, and humorously excuses his offence against propriety on the ground that his mind was not equal to the task — 'ye may wel understonde.'" (Liddell.) **744. Al**: *cf.* l. 734.

747–809. 747. **everichon**: *cf.* l. 31. **750. us leste**, it pleased us. **753. stepe**: *cf.* l. 201. **754. burgeys**: *cf.* l. 369. **Chepe**, Cheapside, one of the wealthiest districts of London. **755. wys**: *cf.* l. 68. **758. pleyen**, to make sport. **760. maad our rekeninges**, paid our bills. **761. lordinges**, gentlemen. **765. herberwe**, inn; a harbor for the traveller: *cf.* l. 403. **766. doon yow mirthe**, give you a good time: *cf.* l. 759. **768. doon yow ese**, make entertainment for you. **770. quyte yow your mede**, may he give (requite) you your reward (for the pilgrimage). **771. woot**: *cf.* l. 389. **772. Ye . . . pleye**, You are intending to tell stories and make sport. **777. yow lyketh**, it pleases you, an impersonal construction, 'yow' being a dative (as also in ll. 775, 776, 779, and 782). **781. fader**: see note on l. 88. **782. But**: see l. 521. **785. Us thoughte**: see note on l. 37. **wys**, a matter of deliberation. **786. avys**, advice, consideration. **788. Lordinges**: *cf.* l. 761. **789. desdeyn**, indifference. **791. to shorte with**, with which to shorten, the relative *which* referring to tales in the next lines. **793. To Caunterbury-ward**: see note on l. 397. **794. othere two.** For the thirty-one characters, who were to tell stories, this would make one hundred and twenty-four tales. The actual number of the *Canterbury Tales* is twenty-four. Of these twenty-four tales, one (the Cook's) was scarcely begun, and another (the Squyer's) was only half completed. See *Il Pens.* (109–115, and notes). **795. whylom**, once on a time. **796. bereth him**: *cf.* l. 721. **798. sentence**, meaning. **solas**, entertainment. **799. our aller**, of us all. **805. withseye**, oppose. 808. **anon**: *cf.* l. 32. **809. erly shape me**, begin to get ready.

810–821. 811. **preyden**, we prayed him, besought. **817. In heigh and lowe**, in all matters important and unimportant, *i.e.* in all respects. **819. fet**, fetched. **820. echon**, each one.

822–858. 822. **A-morwe**, in the morning (the 17th of April): see note on ll. 7–8. **823. our aller cok**, the cock for all of us, *i.e.* aroused us all. **824. And . . . flok.** Thus Chaucer wittily carries out the metaphor in 'cok.' **825. riden**, past tense, plural. **pas**, at a foot pace. **826. watering of seint Thomas.** This was a place for watering horses, at the second milestone on the road from London to Canterbury. St. Thomas is, of course,

Thomas à Becket, the saint of Canterbury: see note on l. 17. **829. woot**: *cf.* l. 389. **forward**, fore word: *cf.* l. 33. **it yow recorde**, remind you of it. **830. If even-song . . . acorde**, If you sing the same song as you did last evening, *i.e.* have not changed your mind. **833–834. Who-so . . . spent**: *cf.* ll. 805–806. **835. draweth cut**, draw lots to see who gets the short straw. **ferrer twinne**, depart further. **837–841. Sire . . . noght**. What reasons may be suggested for singling out the knight, the prioress, and the clerk for the first drawing, before brusquely bidding the others 'ley hond to'? **840. shamfastnesse**, modesty, dislike for prominence. **841. Ne studieth noght.** This is one place in which study would avail the scholar nothing. **842. wight**: *cf.* l. 71. **844. aventure**, chance. **sort**, destiny. **cas**, accident. **846. glad**. What reasons may be suggested for their satisfaction? **847. resoun**, proper or reasonable. **848. forward**: *cf.* l. 829. **composicioun**: the Norman-French equivalent of the Anglo-Saxon 'forward.' **853. shal**, am destined to. **854. What**, equivalent to Why, then. **a Goddes name**, in God's name. **856. riden**: see note on l. 825. **858. in this manere**, thus ending the *Prologue*, and introducing the first of the *Canterbury Tales*. It may interest the student to know which characters actually took part in this story-telling. The order given by the *Ellesmere* manuscript, from which our text is taken, is as follows: (1) Knight; (2) Miller; (3) Reeve; (4) Cook (only begun: see note on l. 794); (5) Man of Law; (6) Wife of Bath; (7) Friar; (8) Summoner; (9) Clerk; (10) Merchant; (11) Squire (only half told: see note on l. 794); (12) Franklin; (13) Doctor; (14) Pardoner; (15) Shipman; (16) Prioress; (17) The Poet; (18) The Poet in his Second Tale; (19) Monk; (20) Nun's Priest; (21) Second Nun; (22) Canon's Yeoman (a new character who had joined the party on the fourth day); (23) Manciple; (24) Parson.

The student should read the paragraphs in the INTRODUCTION to this volume, p. cv, on realism and idealism, and make application of them in the consideration of Chaucer's method. See also INTRODUCTION, pp. xxxix–l, on creative expression, and discuss Chaucer's employment of memory-images, and of figures, poetic, logical, and rhetorical. On the Metrical Tale, see p. xcvi.

SPENSER

FAERIE QUEENE

Gloriana, queen of Fairyland, while holding at her court a solemn festival lasting twelve days, sends out each day a noble knight to do battle against some impersonation of vice or error. This is, in general, the plan of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. The day's adventures of each knight occupy in turn a book of the poem. Each of the twelve champions is supposed to be a representative or embodiment of some one of the twelve virtues, while Prince Arthur (not yet made king), who is to marry Gloriana at the end of the poem, com-

bines them in their highest degree. The poem is hence an allegory, picturing the human soul in its struggle toward perfection. It is also an epic of ideal romance, telling, with wonderful power of imagination and expression, a story of knightly adventure and heroic enterprise. It is linked with the age in which its author lived, partly by symbolizing actual contemporary religious and political struggles, and partly, as some think, by portraying actual men and women of the time under the guise of the knights and ladies of the story. Thus, Gloriana is Queen Elizabeth; Prince Arthur may be Leicester or Sidney; the Red Cross Knight, possibly Raleigh; Duessa, Mary, Queen of Scots.

The *Faerie Queene* was extremely popular from the first. It is and has always been the delight and inspiration of poets. The student who is interested in this selection is advised to proceed with Kitchin's edition of the First Book (Clarendon Press, Oxford), and then to buy a complete edition, such as the Globe (Macmillan). Only six books of the *Faerie Queene* were published; yet, even in this uncompleted state, the poem is one of the longest in the language, — over twice as long as *Paradise Lost* or the *Idylls of the King*. The first three books, legends of Holiness, Temperance, and Chastity, were published in 1590. The last three, of Friendship, Justice, and Courtesy, came out six years later. Portions of a seventh book, on Constancy, were also brought to light after the poet's death. It will be instructive to compare the archaic orthography of this poem with that of Chaucer and of Milton. Since Chaucer's time, two centuries before, many words had been lost; the spelling of others had greatly changed and had become more nearly fixed; final *e* had ceased to be sounded; the sounds of vowels had grown to be more like those of modern English. That the language was still in a formative state, however, is proved by the decided changes which took place between Spenser's time and that of Milton, less than half a century later.

The metrical system of the *Faerie Queene* has been referred to in the INTRODUCTION. It was invented by Spenser, and has accordingly been called the Spenserian stanza. The stanza consists of nine lines, eight of them being 5 *xa* or iambic pentameter, and the ninth 6 *xa*, or iambic hexameter. The eight lines in heroic (*i.e.* epic, or 5 *xa*) measure are made up of two quatrains of alternate rhyme, tied together by rhyming the last line of the first quatrain with the first line of the second. To this eight-line stanza, which had been used by Chaucer in his Monk's tale, Spenser added an iambic hexameter line (an Alexandrine — an old French verse-form) rhyming with the preceding line, and thus created a stanza whose effect is unique in poetry, and which has been used by many subsequent poets, — among others Thomson, Burns, Scott, Byron, Shelley, and Keats. The rhyme and metre system of this stanza may be briefly symbolized as follows: rhyme, *a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c-c*; metre, 8 (5 *xa*) + 1 (6 *xa*). On Epic and Allegory, see INTRODUCTION, pp. xciv–xcvi.

INTRODUCTORY STANZAS: I. The Poet and his task. **1–2. Lo I . . . weeds.** Spenser had formerly ('whylome') been engaged in writing a pastoral (*Shepheard's Calender*, 1579). **4. trumpets . . . reeds.** He is here changing from a pastoral writer to a writer of epic. **7. areeds,** urges or directs.

II–IV. Invocation to the Muse, to Cupid, and to the Queen. **10. Virgin chiefe of nyne.** Clio, the Muse of History. Why was she especially invoked? See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 71–72. **12. scryne,** a chest for keeping books. **14. Tanaquill,** Gloriana: see introduction to notes. **15. Briton Prince,** Arthur, who is represented as journeying in quest of the Faerie Queene. **19. impe,** child, referring to Cupid: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 70. Has the poet any authority for speaking of Jove as Cupid's father? **21. rove,** to shoot, as an arrow. **23. heben,** ebony. **25. Mart,** Mars: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 57–58. **28. Goddesse heavenly bright,** Queen Elizabeth, now an old woman, but none the less fond of flattery. **31. Phoebus lampe,** the sun. **32. eyne,** the old plural of eye. **33–35. too humble . . . afflicted stile.** Affected humility was a common characteristic of many of the earlier English poets.

Canto I. *Introductory lines.* These concisely explain the allegory of the canto. See the introduction to these notes, and the note at the end of the text in this volume.

I–III. **37. Knight,** the Red Cross Knight, or Holiness. **38. Ycladd.** For the force of *y*, see *L'Alleg.* (12). **44. jolly,** fine looking. **45. giusts,** jousts. **51. For,** as a sign of. **53. cheere,** appearance. **54. ydrad:** see note on l. 38. **56. greatest Gloriana,** another compliment to Elizabeth. **58. worshippe,** knightly renown. **60. earne,** yearn. **63. Dragon,** *i.e.* Error. See introduction to notes.

IV–V. **64. Ladie,** Una, or Truth; from Lat. *unus*, since "Truth is one." **67. wimpled:** see *Prologue* (470). **72. milke-white lambe.** What may this typify in the allegory? **75–78. And . . . held.** Una personifies not only Truth, but also Religion as embodied in the Church, which, according to the poet, once had dominion from shore to shore. **79–81. Till . . . compeld.** Error has 'forwasted' the true Church; and Una (Truth) has accordingly called upon the Red Cross Knight (Holiness) to assist in her overthrow.

VI–IX. **82. Dwarfe.** The dwarf is variously explained. Some think he represents "common sense, or prudence"; others that he stands for "the flesh." **84. wearied,** three syllables, as shown by the scansion. **88. lemans.** To what does the poet refer? **89. shrowd it,** ward it off. **92. shadie grove:** the Wood of Error, so dense that it shuts out the stars of heaven, l. 96. **105. sayling pine.** This has been explained as the pine "whence sailing ships are made." **106. never dry.** The poplar is said to grow best in damp soil. **109–110. meed . . . sage.** A wreath of laurel was in ancient times the reward both of victor and of poet. **110. weepeth.** The fir gives forth a liquid balsam. **111. willow,** said to have been used to make garlands for those disappointed in love. **112. eugh,** yew, a wood commonly used in making bows. **113. birch,** for arrows. **sallow,** a species of willow, evidently used for some manufacturing purpose. **114. mirrh,** an Arabian shrub which exudes a bitter-tasting, but sweet-smelling resinous gum, called myrrh. For Myrrha, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 172. **115. beech,** used to make the shafts of lances. **ash for nothing ill,** since valuable for almost every

kind of purpose. **116. platane,** the plane tree. **117. carver holme.** The holm, a species of holly, is especially valuable for carving.

X–XIV. **131. tract,** track, or tracing — obsolete in this sense. **132. hollowe cave,** the cave of Error. **134. Eftsoones**: see *Ancient Mariner* (12). **135. needlesse spere.** Why needless? **137. provoke,** in its radical sense (Lat. *pro*, forth + *vocare*, to call). **142–143. shame . . . shade.** It would be a cowardly action to go back for fear of some possible hidden danger. **144. Vertue . . . wade**: *cf. Comus* (373–375). **146. wot,** know. **150. wandring wood,** wood of error (Lat. *errare*, to wander). **152. read** (rede), advise or counsel. **154. hardiment,** boldness or hardihood — now obsolete. **155. ought,** aught. **162. vile disdaine,** so vile as to disgust the one who sees it.

Is Spenser's view of life idealistic, realistic, romantic, or æsthetic? *Cf.* with Chaucer's. What order of poetic imagination does each possess? See INTRODUCTION, pp. cv and xxxii–xxxv, xli–l.

SONNET TO RALEIGH

This was one of about twenty sonnets which Spenser addressed to various dignitaries of England at the time the first instalment of the *Faerie Queene* was published. These lines are inserted here, not so much for any especial value in themselves as to give an illustration of a sonnet form, entirely different from the form now ordinarily known as a "sonnet." See the discussion of the sonnet in the INTRODUCTION to this book, p. lxxxv, in the discussion of sixteenth-century poetry, and in the notes under Milton and Wordsworth. It will be noted that the stanza we are here considering has the same number of lines as the ordinary sonnet; and that, like the ordinary sonnet, it is written in iambic pentameters. But the rhyme system of Spenser's *Amoretti*, as well as of these dedicatory stanzas, is entirely different from that of the modern sonnet. We have here *a-b-a-b-b-c-b-c-c-d-c-d-e-e*, *i.e.* three quatrains in alternate rhyme, tied together by having the last line of one quatrain rhyme with the first line of the following quatrain (*cf.* the discussion of the rhyme of the Spenserian stanza in the notes to the *Faerie Queene*), these three quatrains being followed by a couplet of different rhyme. This was also the form of Shakespeare's sonnets, and of most of those written by Wyatt and Surrey, except that Shakespeare and the others did not tie the quatrains together by rhyme.

SHAKESPEARE

SONNETS

For the versification see above, and in INTRODUCTION, p. lxxxvii. Most of Shakespeare's sonnets seem to have been produced in 1594. They deal with different themes and are generally of the conventional and affected manner of the day. Some genuine emotion occasionally displays itself in the series addressed to a young nobleman, probably Shakespeare's patron, Henry

Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. We cannot say, for certain, whether one or all of the five sonnets given in the text were of this series. These sonnets offer no unusual difficulties to the reader: hence it has been thought best to present them without annotation. They have been included in this book as representative of Shakespeare's non-dramatic poetry; and, as such, may profitably be compared with the sonnets of Milton or of Wordsworth. It may also be of interest to compare the diction and orthography of Shakespeare with that of his contemporary, Spenser.

MILTON

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSEROSO

These poems were written, probably sometime in 1632, at the beginning of Milton's residence at Horton. They are companion poems, and as such each must be read in the light of the other. *L'Allegro* (the cheerful man) is here the lover of society and of unreflecting, though innocent, mirth. *Il Penseroso* (the thoughtful man) is the recluse, living, not like *L'Allegro*, in the enjoyment of the present, but with an eye toward a larger life in the future. *L'Allegro* is ever ready to indulge in the pleasures of his fellows. *Il Penseroso* is a seeker after that solitude which furnishes opportunity for study and meditation. Each is entirely unable to appreciate, or even to understand, the ideals of the other. (On Reflective Poetry, see INTRODUCTION, p. xcvii.)

Though each poem, in a way, represents the manner in which a *day* might ideally be spent (in *L'Allegro*, from early morning till midnight, and in *Il Penseroso*, from early evening till the next noon), the poet does much more than this, by making the day in each case representative of the whole life which each character would desire to live. In all probability Milton did not intend either of these poems to picture the true ideal; but rather designed to suggest through them complementary, though contrasted, aspects of human temperament. Thus the two poems are really not two, but one, "whose theme," as some one has said, "is the praise of the reasonable life."

The metre of the poems is suggestive. In the *Il Penseroso* the lines are, for the most part, smooth, unbroken, iambic tetrameters — well suited to the thoughtful, contemplative poem. The iambic tetrameter of *L'Allegro*, on the other hand, is varied by trochaic effects. These are produced by what is called truncation (see INTRODUCTION, pp. lix, lxviii); the first light syllable of the iambic tetrameter being omitted, so that the rhythm reads like that of trochaic tetrameter, or trochaic tetrameter catalectic (last syllable wanting); these quickly spoken, lively feet suggesting the mood of the more sprightly composition. As illustrative of this, note the lines where each of the two men summons his ideal divinity:

Com, and trip it, as ye go. — *L'Alleg.* (33).

Com, pensive Nun, devout and pure. — *Il Pens.* (31).

Since these poems are not divided into stanzas, in the following notes a grouping of lines has been made which may serve for stanzaic divisions.

L'ALLEGRO

1–10. Observe and describe the rhyme and metre of these lines, showing how the rough and irregular verse is well suited to the mood of the passage. **1. Melancholy,** here equivalent to an austere and meditative conduct of life. **2. Cerberus.** For this three-headed dog of the underworld, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 79, 238. **3. Stygian.** For Styx, the river bounding the infernal regions, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 78. **5. uncouth** (past part. of A.-S. *un* + *cunnan*), hence, originally, not known. But that which was not known was once naturally regarded with distrust or aversion; hence the secondary meanings, — first, outlandish; then, ugly or repulsive. Here the poet evidently has in mind both the radical and the derived meaning. **10. Cimmerian:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 195. What attributes of Melancholy does *L'Allegro* imply by the imaginary parentage he ascribes? the birthplace? the surroundings?

11–24. Show the metre and rhyme of this and succeeding divisions as contrasted with the first ten lines. **12. ycleap'd** (from A.-S. *ge*, or *y*, or *i* — in early English frequently a sign of the perfect passive participle + *clipian*, to call) hence called or named. **Euphrosyne,** one of the Graces: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 71. **13. heart-easing.** Note the felicity of this compound epithet and of others of the same kind. In his coinage of such words, Milton undoubtedly excels all other English poets. Always suggestive and frequently beautiful, they have been termed, not inaptly, "poems in miniature." **14; 16. lovely Venus; ivy-crowned Bacchus:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 65–66, 76; and show what characteristics such parentage would tend to give to Mirth. **17. sager:** an adjective, but here used with adverbial force. **19. Zephir with Aurora.** By reference to *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 72, 73, show why Milton preferred this parentage for Mirth rather than the one given above. Probably no English poet has known or understood the Classics better than Milton. Any deviation from the accepted stories or genealogies of Geeek mythology must, therefore, be regarded as a conscious alteration for purposes of his own. **21. blew,** blue. Though numerous archaic forms are found in Milton, it will be noted that since the time of Spenser, fifty years before, the language had been making great strides toward its present orthography. **24. debonair** (Fr. *de* + *bon* + *aire*), of good bearing or manners.

25–36. Name the companions of Mirth, describe each, and show the attributes which make each good company. **29. Hebe's cheek.** For this goddess of youth, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 71. **33. trip it.** Here 'it' is a cognate accusative, the meaning of which is derived from the governing verb. **33–34. Com . . . toe.** Note this well-known couplet, now popularly applied to the encouragement of dancing, but invented by the poet of Puritanism. **36. Liberty.** Why is 'Liberty' called a mountain nymph?

37–40. These four lines are transitional, introducing the rest of the poem. *L'Allegro* now imagines himself spending a day in conformity with his ideals of happiness. See introduction to notes. **40. unreproved pleasures free.** Note the order of the words — very common in Milton : a post positive adjective modifying the idea expressed in the two words which precede it. **unreproved,** unreprovable, *i.e.* innocent.

41–68. Describe the five definite pictures which together make up this division. **41. To hear.** Show whether this is an infinitive of purpose (or result) modifying 'admit' and coördinate with 'to live' (39), or is in apposition with 'pleasures,' and one of them. **41; 42. begin; startle.** Explain the syntax of these infinitives. **44. dappled Dawn.** Describe the picture. **45. to com.** The syntax and consequent meaning of this infinitive offer quite a puzzle. Does the *lark* come, or *L'Allegro*, or the *Dawn?* To whom or what, in each case, would 'good morrow' be bidden ? What, in each case, would be the syntax of 'to com' ? This last question is very important and illustrates something the student will frequently notice, *viz.*, how necessary to accurate interpretation is a clear understanding of syntactical relations. **45. in spight** (spite) **of,** not, as usual, notwithstanding; but rather, in order to spite or defy. **52. before,** a post-positive preposition. **53–56. Oft . . . shrill.** Put these four lines into prose order, showing what 'echoing' modifies, and indicating the images the lines possess for eye and ear. **57. walking.** Give the syntax. **not unseen,** he likes company. Compare this line with *Il Pens.* (65), and show which of the two lines seems to have been modelled on the other. **62. clouds,** nominative independent before a participle. Compare the Latin ablative absolute. **dight,** arrayed, is now rarely used. **67. tells his tale,** counts his number (of sheep), the old meaning of 'tale.' What hours of the day have the occurrences of this division occupied ?

69–90. **69–70. Streit . . . measures.** Note the effect of the trochaic lines and feminine rhymes as marking a sudden transition of thought. **69. Streit** (straight), straightway. **round,** an adverb. **71. lawns,** a favorite word with Milton, and often found in other poets. It always means a large, open, grassy stretch of country, not a cultivated lawn or grass-plot. **75. pide** (pied). Show whether this modifies 'meadows' or 'daisies.' **78. boosom'd.** Explain. **79. som beauty lies,** some high-born and beautiful lady dwells. **80. cynosure:** see *Dict.* for derivation and history, showing how a word that originally meant dog's tail has come to signify centre of attraction. **83. Corydon and Thyrsis,** common names for shepherds in pastoral poets, such as the Greek Theocritus or the Roman Virgil. Likewise 'Thestylis,' l. 88, and 'Phillis,' l. 86, are shepherdesses. What shows, as was indicated at the beginning of these notes, that the poet is not endeavoring to depict any single day? **87. bowre** (bower), as often in Milton, means a dwelling place — here a cottage. **90. tann'd haycock.** Why 'tann'd' ?

91–99. **91. secure** (Lat. *se*, or *sine*, + *cura*), with its radical meaning, without care, care-free. Remember that Milton wrote nearly three hundred years ago, and that we may consequently expect to find many words in

their earlier, radical, or primary meaning, rather than their later, derived, or secondary meaning. **94. jocond.** Observe that this is a transferred epithet. What is really 'jocund'? **rebeck,** a sort of three-stringed fiddle. **96. chequer'd shade.** Why chequered? **98. holyday.** What was the original meaning of 'holiday,' as suggested by the old spelling in the text. See derivation and history.

100–116. 101. **feat,** in Milton's time pronounced fāte, and rhyming with 'eat' (past tense). **102. Mab,** the fairy, "no bigger than the agate stone on the fore-finger of an alderman" (as Mercutio says in *Romeo and Juliet*), whose function it was to bring dreams. Milton may have had in mind Ben Jonson's —

> "This is Mab, the mistress Fairy
> That doth nightly rob the dairy,
> * * * * * *
> She that pinches country wenches
> If they rub not clean their benches."

junkets, a kind of cream cheese. See first couplet above. **103. She,** a country wench, as in second couplet above. **104. he,** the second teller of stories, a shepherd or farm servant, is led by Friar Rush (a house haunter, confused here with Jack o' Lantern or Will o' the Wisp) to a spot where he sees the 'drudging goblin,' Robin Goodfellow, or the Puck of Shakespeare, perform the feats of ll. 105–114. **106. cream-bowle,** 'duly set' out by the farm servants to tempt the sturdy little goblin to do their work for them. **110–112. lubbar fend** (lubber fiend), **stretch'd, chimney's length, hairy strength** — all seem expressions oddly suited to Robin Goodfellow. Why? **113. crop-full,** stomach-stuffed. **flings.** Observe the headlong haste implied. **114. mattin** (a French word, meaning morning), here means morning call, just as the matin-bell called to early prayers. **115. tales:** see note on 'clouds,' l. 62.

117–124. Discuss the following interpretations of this passage: (1) That *L'Allegro* really goes to the city after his rustic companions have retired. (2) That 'then' means not *afterward*, but *on other occasions* or *also*, the visit to the city being actual, but on a different day. (3) That his visit is in imagination and revery, brought about by his readings after his companions have gone to bed. **118. busie humm.** Observe the onomatopœia. **120. weeds,** now used chiefly in the expression "widow's weeds." Thus many words, no longer in common use, are still retained in compounds or special phrases: *cf.* riding-habit, dove-cote, hand-kerchief, etc. **triumphs** (from Lat. *triumphus*, a procession, originally in honor of Bacchus, and later to grace a Roman victory), here some kind of an imposing tournament. **122. Rain influence,** in its radical sense (Lat. *in* + *fluere*); give forth, like the stars, a magic control which shapes the destinies of mankind. **122. judge the prise.** This 'influence' or control was such that those upon whom it flowed could not help but win. In this way the prize is judged (or adjudged) by the 'bright eyes.' **123. wit.** The contests seem to be not only physical, such as tourneys, but also intellectual. What, for instance?

125–134. **125–126. Hymen . . . taper clear.** The clear taper was supposed to foretell a happy marriage: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 70, 185. **127. Pomp,** etc. The god of marriage, thus portrayed, was no uncommon figure in the masques and pageants of Milton's time. **128. Pageantry.** Pageants were originally movable platforms or wagons on which actors performed; then the word came to refer to the performance on such a platform; and finally it signified any such elaborate spectacle, wherever produced. **129–130. Such . . . stream.** Note the exquisite thought, imagery, and sound of these lines. They form a bit of rare poetry. **132. Jonson's learned sock.** Discuss the implied comparison between this scholarly writer of dramas and masques, and 'sweetest Shakespear, Fancie's child.' **sock.** Look up the *soccus*, or low slipper of the classic comedian, as contrasted with the buskin, or *cothurnus*, of the tragedian. **133. Fancie's childe.** Explain. **134. native wood-notes wilde.** Name three or four comedies of Shakespeare which this particularly describes.

135–150. Observe the liquid sounds and onomatopoetic effects of which these lines are full. **135. against,** as a protection from. **136. Lydian aires.** The three kinds of Greek music were the serious and majestic Dorian, the bright and sprightly Phrygian, and the soft and voluptuous Lydian. **137. Married to immortal verse,** *i.e.* music and words joined together as in an opera. **138. meeting soul.** Why 'meeting'? **141. wanton heed; giddy cunning.** What does the poet mean by these seeming paradoxes? **142. voice:** see note on l. 62. **143–144. Untwisting . . . harmony.** The harmony in the human soul is assumed to be bound or fettered, except on those rare occasions when some strong stimulus or emotion untwists its fetters and sets it free. **145–150. Orpheus . . . Eurydice.** Review the story in detail: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 185–188. **147. Elysian:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 81, 82. **149. quite.** How nearly did Pluto free Eurydice?

What kind of imagery is principally used in this poem? Derived or poetic? What senses are appealed to, and what is the class of each poetic figure? (See INTRODUCTION, pp. xiii, cix.) Comment upon the melody of ll. 135–153, noting the sequence of vowel-tones and of consonants (INTRODUCTION, pp. lxix, lxxiii). Indicate the metres of ll. 12, 13, 19–22, 25, 45, 46, 69–72, 131–136.

IL PENSEROSO

See remarks introducing the notes to *L'Allegro*. As in the case of the other poem, a grouping of lines has here been made to serve for stanzaic divisions.

1–10. Make a comparison between these lines and the opening lines of *L'Allegro*, noting metre, rhyme, and contents. **2. brood . . . bred.** They spring from Folly alone, *i.e.* are utterly frivolous. **3. besteád.** This uncommon verb here means profit, satisfy, or avail. **6. fond** (originally *fonned*, the perfect participle of the A.-S. verb *fonnen*, to be foolish). As late as Shakespeare's time the word was generally used in this radical sense of foolish. Its derived meanings have been (1) foolishly loving; (2) affectionate;

(3) loving — the early idea having fully disappeared. **7–8. As thick . . . beams.** How are these foolish fancies like the motes of the sunbeam? 10. **fickle pensioners,** a retinue or body-guard which cannot be relied upon by the lord or lady which supports it. Explain the application. **Morpheus.** For peculiarities of the god of dreams see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 84, 196.

11–30. Show the effect of the change in metre. Compare with *L'Alleg.* (11–24). Point out the lines in this passage which have no counterpart in *L'Allegro.* 12. **Melancholy**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (1) and *cf. Comus* (546), 'pleasing fit of melancholy.' 13–16. **Whose . . . hue.** Just as a light may be so dazzling that the eye directed toward it is blinded and sees only darkness, so *L'Allegro* has seen nothing but blackness, and accordingly has called her 'loathed,' not realizing that the blackness is his own imperfection. A striking analogy to this thought is the poetic conception of the "music of the spheres," where the human ear, oblivious to the divine harmonies, perceives only silence. See note on *Comus* (112). 17. **in esteem,** in the estimation of the observer. 18. **Prince Memnon's sister.** For Memnon, king of the Ethiopians and friend of the Trojans, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 199, 303. There are only the vaguest accounts of any sister; yet Milton creates her as a counterpart of Melancholy. Blackness would 'beseem' or suit such a beauty as hers. 19–21. **starr'd Ethiope queen . . . offended.** Read the story of Cassiopea in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 228–229. According to the usual version, it was the beauty of Cassiopea's daughter, Andromeda, which was compared with that of the sea nymphs. Both mother and daughter were afterward placed in the sky as constellations; hence 'starred.' 22. **higher,** than who? 23–30. **long of yore, solitary Saturn, Saturn's reign, While yet there was no fear of Jove,** all point back to the "Golden Age" before Jupiter had ascended the throne. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 39, 88. Also determine the attributes of Melancholy through the parentage assigned to her. See Saturn (or Cronus, his Greek prototype) and Vesta in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 39 and 69. 29. **woody Ida,** more probably the mountain of Crete than that of Asia Minor.

31–54. Compare with the corresponding passage in *L'Allegro.* Also contrast the rhythm of the two passages. 31. **pensive Nun.** Why so called? 33. **grain** (Lat. *granum*), a seed or kernel; hence a seedlike object, such as the body of the cochineal insect, from which we get a rich purple dye. Thus 'grain' comes to be used for this red or purple color. 35. **Cipres** (cypress or cyprus) **lawn,** refers to a kind of fine crape. 36. **decent,** used here in its radical sense of comely or becoming: *cf. Des. Vil.* (12). 39. **commercing,** holding intercourse or communion with. 40. **soul**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (62). 42. **Forget . . . marble,** become like a statue in thy rapt thoughtfulness. 46–48. **Spare Fast . . . sing.** Milton often repeats this endorsement of "plain living and high thinking,"—that only the temperate or abstemious man can 'diet' (or dine) with the gods; that he only can receive true poetic inspiration,—'hear the Muses sing.' Look up the Muses in

Cl. D. or *Cl. M.*, pp. 71, 72. **52–54. Him that yon soars . . . Contemplation.** Professor Masson thus explains this passage: "A daring use of the great vision, in *Ezekiel*, chap. x, of the sapphire throne, the wheels of which were four cherubs, while in the midst of them and underneath the throne was a burning fire. Milton ventures to *name* one of these cherubs who guide the fiery wheelings of the visionary throne."

55–84. Give not only the theme of this division, but also the extent and theme of each of its three subdivisions. Point out the corresponding passage in *L'Allegro*. **55. hist,** now an interjection, but, as used here, an imperative, pure onomatopœia and very expressive. **56. Philomel.** A common poetical term for the nightingale. For her story, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 258. **57. plight.** This may be the present word meaning unfortunate condition; or, as some think, a strain of music, as being made up of sounds interwoven or plaited. This is the sense of the words in 'plighted clouds,' *Comus* (301). **59. While Cynthia . . . yoke.** The birthplace of Diana was Mt. Cynthus in Delos; hence her name 'Cynthia.' See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 63. The 'dragon yoke' was probably Milton's invention. Dragons were driven by Ceres, Medea, and others, but not by Diana. See note on *L'Alleg.* (19). **60. accustom'd oke.** Is the oak 'accustomed' as respects the bird, the moon, or the poet? **63–64. Thee . . . even-song.** Put these two lines into prose order. **65. unseen:** *cf.* with 'not unseen,' *L'Alleg.* (57), and see note. **68. highest noon:** *i.e.* the zenith. **74. curfeu** (Fr. *couvre + feu*, cover-fire), a bell rung about eight or nine o'clock in the evening, originally as a signal for fires to be extinguished. See Gray's *Elegy* (1). **76. Swinging . . . roar.** Show the effect of the alliteration and the onomatopœia. **78. fit,** suit my mood. **83. belman's drousie charm,** the night-watchman used to repeat pious verses to charm evil away from the doors. This was naturally a mere droning formula; hence 'drowsy.'

85–96. **87. out-watch the Bear,** stay up later than the constellation of the Great Bear. But in the latitude of England this constellation does not set, disappearing only with the dawn. Thus we may infer the duration of *Il Penseroso*'s studies. **88. With thrice great Hermes.** Hermes Trismegistus (*i.e.* Hermes, thrice great,), a fabled Egyptian king, was supposed to have lived about the time of Moses. He is probably the same as the mythical Egyptian philosopher Thot, whom the Greeks believed identical with their god Hermes. Several philosophical works of an ideal nature, written during the early centuries of the Christian era, and much studied in mediæval times, were, in a vague way, ascribed to him; and it is these books that *Il Penseroso* delights to spend the night in reading. **88–89. unsphear** (unsphere) **The spirit of Plato,** *i.e.* call his spirit back from the sphere of the other world through studying his philosophy. *Il Penseroso* wishes to learn from him (1) the truths of immortality which he so early taught, and (2) the doctrine of demonology suggested by him and taught by his followers. These 'dæmons,' or spirits, were divided into various classes, each having a harmony, or intimate relation ('consent'), with one of the various primary elements, —

earth, air, fire, and water. **92. mansion** (Lat. *manēre*), in its original sense, the place where one remains. **fleshly nook,** *i.e.* the body.

97–102. 98. **In scepter'd pall com sweeping by,** *i.e.* 'sweeping by' in imagination, since he is *reading* these Greek tragedies. **pall** (Lat. *palla*) is the cloak worn by the tragic actor, who would also, in his character of a royal personage, carry a scepter. 99. **Presenting Thebs, or Pelops' line,** *i.e.* representing (1) the descendants of the house of Thebes, especially Œdipus and his children (such plays, for example, as the *Seven against Thebes* of Æschylus, and the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, the *Œdipus Coloneus*, and the *Antigone* of Sophocles); and (2) the great-grandson of Pelops, Agamemnon, and his family (such plays as the *Agamemnon* and the *Eumenides* of Æschylus; the *Electra* of Sophocles; and the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and the *Electra* of Euripides). 100. **Or the tale of Troy divine,** *i.e.* tragedies concerning characters who appear in the Trojan war (for example, the *Ajax* and the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles, and the *Andromache* and the *Hecuba* of Euripides). Look up these names in the *Cl. D.* or in the *Cl. M.*, by reference to the index, especially the story of the descendants of Cadmus and of Pelops. *Cl. M.*, pp. 269–275, and pp. 285–288, 310–312. 101. **Or . . . age.** Milton is undoubtedly thinking of Shakespeare; perhaps also of Ben Jonson. 102. **buskin'd stage**: the stage trod by actors wearing the buskin or *cothurnus*, "the boot with high heels, designed to add to the stature, and so to the dignity of the tragic actor." (Hales.)

103–108. 104. **Musæus,** son of Orpheus, and first of Greek poets. For these semi-mythological bards and their adventures, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 23, 185–188. 107–108. **Drew . . . cheek,** the same story as suggested in *L'Alleg.* (145–150).

109–120. 109. **him that left half told.** Chaucer, who did not complete his *Canterbury Tales*, left unfinished the *Squire's Tale*, which tells of the adventures of the Tartar king, 'Cambuscan.' According to this story —

> "This noble Kyng, this Tartre, — this Cambynskan
> Hadde two sones by Eltheta his wyf,
> Of which the eldest highte Algersyf,
> That other was i-cleped Camballo;
> A doghter had this worthie King also
> That yongest was, and highte Canace.
> * * * * * * *
> Ther cam a Knight up-on a stede of bras,
> And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.
> Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,
> And by his side a naked swerd hanging."

The horse of brass was given to Cambuscan; to the fair Canace was presented the 'ring' and the 'glass,' both 'vertuous' or magically powerful, since through the one was told the language of every bird that sang, while in the other were revealed the thoughts of all mankind. Chaucer does not give

the name of him 'who had Canace to wife,' though Spenser, who continued the poem, has supplied the omission. 113. **That**, a relative pronoun referring to Canace. In the English of to-day a non-restrictive relative clause is always introduced by who or which; but not so in Milton's time. 116. **great bards beside.** From the three lines that follow, it is clear that the poet has reference to Spenser and his *Faerie Queene*. Among others in his mind were probably Ariosto and Tasso, the Italian poets of chivalry. 120. **Where more is meant than meets the ear.** Though this line undoubtedly refers to the allegorical nature of the writings of these 'great bards,' it also furnishes a splendid canon for all true poetry. Explain.

121–130. 121. **Thus . . . career.** Observe how this pentameter line marks a break in the thought. 122. **civil-suited**, the plain garb of the citizen as contrasted with the bright colors of the soldier or courtier. 124. **Attick boy.** Whenever Aurora went to meet her lover Cephalus, she was decked out in her brightest colors. See Aurora and Cephalus in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 192–194. 125. **Kercheft** (Fr. *couvre* + *chef*, *i.e.* cover for the head). 128. **his.** The neuter possessive had hardly come into use in Milton's time. 130. **minute drops**, the drops at the end of the shower, falling at intervals of something like a minute.

131–154. 131; 132. **fling; flaring.** Show how these words are particularly apt as indicating the attitude of *Il Penseroso*. 134. **Sylvan.** For this Roman god of the fields and forests, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 89. 135. **monumental**, because a massive memorial of past ages. **oake.** For another and earlier form of the word, see l. 60. 136. **rude ax . . . heaved stroke.** An interesting transference of epithet, the ax being heaved, and the stroke, rude. 137. **nymphs.** Look up the wood nymphs in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 77. 140. **profaner eye.** This wood is *Il Penseroso's* temple, and any intrusion of the merely inquisitive would be a profanation. 145. **consort**, similar sounds of nature. Note the onomatopœia of the two or three preceding lines. 146. **dewy-feather'd.** Explain. For Milton's use of compound epithets, see notes to *L'Alleg.* (13). 147–150. **And let . . . laid.** A difficult passage. Put it into prose order before attempting to decipher its meaning. The following suggestions may be helpful. 'Display'd in airy stream' modifies and follows 'dream'; 'laid softly on my eyelids' modifies and follows 'stream of lively portrature'; 'his' (see note on l. 128) refers to 'sleep' (the dreams, waving at the wings of sleep, thus casting images on the eyelids of the sleeper). 151. **breathe.** Supply 'let' from l. 147. 153. **good.** What does this modify? 154. **Genius**, the protecting spirit of the wood.

155–166. 156. **studious cloyster's pale**, *i.e.* the precincts or enclosure ('pale') of some institution established for educational purposes and for religious worship. 157. **high embowed roof**, the arched roof, possibly of the same cloister. 158. **antick**, antique. **massy proof**, proof against the mass they must sustain; or, as others think, proof against the weight they must support, on account of their own massiveness. 159. **storied windows**, some Bible story being pictured in their stained glass. **dight**: see note on

L'Alleg. (62). **165–166. Dissolve me . . . mine eyes,** the spiritual exaltation which such a service, amid such surroundings, naturally tends to produce in an emotional and artistic nature.

167–174. These lines have no counterpart in the other poem, for the very essence of *L'Allegro's* philosophy was: Enjoy the present, and let the future take care of itself. **167. weary age.** Note the metonymy. **169. hairy gown,** such as was worn by hermits or monks for penance, or by holy men of old. **170. spell,** *i.e.* study out, slowly, carefully, thoughtfully, the mysteries of earth and of heaven, until finally the inward vision may gain a power like that possessed by the prophets.

175–176. Compare with *L'Alleg.* (151–152).

Comment upon the wedding of sound and sense in ll. 130–138; upon the alliteration and the gradation of vowel sounds in ll. 138–152 and 155–166 (INTRODUCTION, pp. lxxiii, lxxvii). What poetic use is made of sequences of proper names? Which are the most ornate descriptions, and what is the secret of their charm? (INTRODUCTION, pp. xlii–l.)

LYCIDAS

Edward King, a fellow-student of Milton in Christ's College, was drowned in crossing from England to Ireland during the summer of 1637. King had entered Cambridge when a boy of only fourteen, and had spent eleven years — all of his youth and young manhood — as a well-loved son of his *alma mater*. A fellow of his college at the age of eighteen, a tutor soon afterward, a candidate for the ministry, a verse writer (chiefly in Latin) of at least a college reputation, he had so gained the love of his associates that they were deeply affected by his sudden and untimely death. They resolved, therefore, to issue a little book of verses as a memorial, and asked Milton's aid. This was during the latter part of the poet's residence at Horton, and three years after his last poem, *Comus* (1634). That these three years had been spent in silence was due to a settled purpose, on Milton's part, not to write again till he had arrived at that 'inward ripeness' which should enable him to attain to some such noble art as long afterward found expression in his epics. It is accordingly with no pretended reluctance that he breaks this resolution, and, in November, 1637, contributes this elegy. It is largely in the pastoral vein; and, save for a few digressions, is a lament of a shepherd for his fellow. Hence "Lycidas," a name for a shepherd, frequently used by Theocritus and Virgil, the most famous pastoral poets of classic literature.

1–14. The circumstances under which the poem was written. **1. once more,** the first time since 1634. **1–2. Laurels, Myrtles, Ivy,** plants of Apollo and Bacchus, associated in classic thought as symbols of poetry — the materials of the poet's wreath. **3. harsh and crude,** immature, unripe, not ready to fall naturally. **4. forc'd fingers rude,** 'forc'd' against my real desire, and 'rude,' because in this way only can these unripe berries be plucked. **6. dear,** the duty is painful, yet tender. **7. Compels.** Justify the

singular verb. **11. lofty rhyme,** rather extravagant praise. King, though he wrote verses (fairly good ones in Latin), was, after all, no poet. **12. bear,** bier. **13. welter to.** Meaning? **14. melodious tear,** memorial poem, elegy.

What is the rhyme and metre of this poem as a whole? Point out some lines not of the prevailing metre and see if you can ascertain the poetic value or effect of the deviations. (On Elegy, see INTRODUCTION, p. xcviii.)

15–22. The address to the Muses. **15. Sacred Well.** This is generally taken to mean the Muses' birthplace, — the Pierian fount at the foot of Olympus. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 455. **18. coy,** hesitating and unwilling. **19. Muse,** poet, so called because so inspired. **20. lucky,** well-omened. **my destin'd urn,** the urn destined to hold my ashes, when I, like Lycidas, am dead.

23–36. A stanza filled with references to Milton's college life, expressed in the metaphor of the pastoral. In this connection, Masson says, "The hill is, of course, Cambridge; the joint feeding of the flocks is companionship in study; the rural ditties are academic iambics and elegiacs; and old Damætas is probably Dr. Chappell" — the tutor of both King and Milton. In this manner suggest a meaning for 'fountain,' 'shade,' 'rill,' 'high lawns,' etc. **25. lawns:** see note on *L'Alleg.* (71). **26. opening eyelids.** Explain the figure. **27. a field.** Here 'a' is a weakened form of the preposition on. **28. What time,** equivalent to at the time when, thus making 'heard' (27) intransitive, and explaining l. 28 as an adverbial clause. **28. gray-fly.** This is the trumpet fly, a species of botfly, which, by the motion of its wings, makes a droning sound, especially in hot or sultry weather. Hence, 'sultry horn.' **29. with,** at the time of. **30. the star,** Hesperus, the name given to Venus when it appears as the evening star. See note on *Comus* (93). **31. Towards . . . wheel.** What time of night would this be? **33. oaten flute,** the reed pipe or flute of the shepherd; but what does it stand for here? **34. Satyrs and Fauns:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 77, 89. To what do they here refer? **36. Damætas,** a common name in classic pastoral. See Masson's note above.

37–49. Contrast the happiness of active life in the last stanza with the heavy sadness of this. **40. gadding vine.** Explain the adjective. **44. joyous leaves.** Why 'joyous'? **45. canker,** the cankerworm. **46. taint-worm,** a small red spider. **47. gay wardrop.** Why 'gay wardrobe'? **48. white thorn,** the hawthorn.

50–63. Except for local names and color, this passage is a close imitation of the first idyl of Theocritus and of the tenth eclogue of Virgil. **50. Nymphs.** Were these *wood nymphs* (*Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 77) or *Muses* (*Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 71–72)? **52. the steep,** some mountain in Wales, where the Druids are supposed to be buried. **54. Mona,** the Roman name of Anglesey, a steep, high, and thickly wooded island off the coast of Wales. Why 'shaggy'? **55. Deva,** the river Dee, between England and Wales. Chester, the port from which King sailed (see Milton's argument at head of poem), is on this river. **wisard stream.** The river was supposed to possess supernatural qualities. **56. Ay me! I fondly dream.** What makes this line so effective?

fondly, in its primary meaning, foolishly. Notice that the object of 'dream' is the interrupted speech in the following line. **58–63. What . . . shore.** He shows that the 'nymphs' could have done nothing, had they 'been there,' by recalling the powerlessness of Calliope, chief of the Muses (*Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 138, 185) to save her own son Orpheus from his terrible death. Read the story of this death in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 187–188. **58. Orpheus.** Give the syntax. **61. rout.** Who composed this 'rout,' and why did they make a 'roar'? **63. Lesbian shore,** upon which, according to the story, the head of the bard at last floated.

64–84. The first digression of the poem. Does it pay, the poet asks, to strive after and attain poetic ideals, when the applause of the world is not for such effort, but rather for the superficial and trivial? Lines 65–66 refer to the true poet, while ll. 68–69 have reference to the more popular, second-rate lyric writers of the day. It is but fair to add that some critics believe that Milton is making a contrast, not between two kinds of poets, but between a life of poetic effort and one of mere pleasure. **67. use,** are accustomed to do. **68–69. Amaryllis and Neæra,** shepherdesses of the classic pastoral, the dalliance with whom typifies a life, frivolous, self-indulgent, uninspired by ideals. **70. Fame . . . spur.** In what sense is fame a 'spur'? **71. last infirmity.** After all other infirmities have been conquered by the 'noble minds,' a love of fame still survives. **73–76. But . . . life.** Explain. Note that Fate, Atropos (*Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 72), is so merciless in this act as to seem a 'Fury.' But why 'blind'? **76–84. But . . . meed.** Apollo, god of song and of the true poet, here speaks. **76. praise.** Give the syntax. **77. trembling,** a participle, modifying the substantive idea in the possessive 'my,' *i.e.* the ears of me trembling. **79. glistering foil,** a plate of shining metal placed under a jewel to increase its brightness. Explain the metaphor as applied to fame. **81. by,** here a very important word. What relation does it express?

85–102. Neptune sends his herald, Triton, to ascertain where lies the responsibility for Lycidas's death. But first the poet acknowledges to the spirit of the pastoral that, in listening to the voice of Phœbus, he has for the moment put aside the 'oat,' or pastoral pipe. The address to 'Arethuse' (*Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 142–145), a river of Ortygia, an island off Sicily, suggests the Greek writer of pastorals, — Theocritus of Sicily; while 'Mincius,' a stream of northern Italy, calls up the image of Virgil, who lived upon its banks. **87. higher mood,** than the pastoral can express. **90. plea.** Explain. **91. fellon.** Why 'felon winds'? **93. of rugged wings,** a descriptive phrase. Why 'rugged'? **96. Hippotades.** Note the Greek patronymic for Æolus, king of the winds (son of Hippotas): see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 73, 526. **99. Panope,** one of the fifty Nereids: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 85, 526. **101. Built in th' eclipse,** etc., and hence ill-omened.

103–107. Really a separate stanza, although not so printed in the original. **103. Camus,** the presiding deity of the river Cam, and hence representing Cambridge [with *Cam* + *bridge*, compare *Ox* (or *Usk*, a river) + *ford*].

The Cam is a sluggish river filled with river weeds and sedges. **104. mantle, bonnet**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (62). **105. figures dim**, markings on the sedge leaf. **106. sanguine**, in its radical sense (from Lat. *sanguis*, blood). **flower**, the hyacinth. For the story of Hyacinthus, and the markings on the flower named after him, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 120–121. **woe**, the Greek word ἀἰ (alas), inscribed upon the petals of the hyacinth, and expressing the sorrow of Phœbus. **107. pledge**, sometimes, as here, means offspring, or child, since children were once often given as hostages or pledges. See the introduction to these notes for King's close association with his university.

108–131. This second digression is a very remarkable passage. The young poet, with intense scorn, denounces the corruption of the Church and clergy of his day, and foreshadows the spirit of the Milton who, a few years later, was to aid the Puritan rebellion with his stern, controversial prose. **109. pilot . . . lake**: see *Matthew* iv. 18. **110. massy** (massive) **keyes**, carried by St. Peter as a symbol of his function: see *Matthew* xvi. 19. **114. Anow**, enow, enough. **bellies' sake**, material welfare. **115. Creep, intrude, climb.** Discriminate between these three ways of invading the ministry. For a very full and careful explanation of this whole passage, see Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, toward the end of the first third of the essay. **117. scramble . . . feast**, press forward to the allotment of church endowments. What is meant by 'the worthy bidden guest'? **119. Blind mouthes.** As Ruskin points out, this striking metaphor indicates the very antithesis of a true clergyman. These men are 'blind,' and are 'mouths' open for the feeding; whereas they should be spiritual overseers — bishops, and feeders of their flocks — pastors. Look up the derivation of bishop and of pastor. **119–120. that . . . sheep-hook.** What does the clause modify? **122. What . . . sped.** Explain each of these three sentences. **123. lean and flashy songs**, unsatisfying and insipid sermons. What is the syntax of 'songs'? **124. scrannel**, thin. **125. hungry**, for what? **126. wind and rank mist they draw** (draw in, inhale), the vapid and unsound teachings. **127. Rot . . . spread.** What does this mean? **128. grim woolf.** By the 'wolf,' Milton undoubtedly meant the Church of Rome, which was every day gaining new converts from the 'sheepfold' of the English Church, with no one to object; for the English archbishop, Laud, is said to have leaned toward Catholicism. **130. two-handed engine**, perhaps more discussed than any other expression in Milton's works. 'Engine' in his time was used as in our phrase "engine of death." Accordingly, it has been taken to mean an axe (see *Matthew* iii. 10), a sword (see *Revelation* i. 16), the two houses of Parliament (the word 'engine' was sometimes used in Milton's time to mean Parliament), the Old and the New Testament, and various other things. The meaning in general is, however, plain, that the time of final retribution is at hand.

132–151. Though not set off in the original text, these lines really form the next stanzaic division. **132–133. Return . . . streams**, another acknowledgment of a digression from the true pastoral: *cf.* ll. 85–87. **Alpheus**, poetically connected with Arethusa: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 142–145.

For this and **Sicilian Muse**, see note on ll. 85–102. **dread voice.** Whose was the voice that had shrunk his streams, and what does the latter phrase mean? **136. use**, obsolete in this sense, *viz.*, to have one's dwelling place. **137. Of shades**, etc., modifies 'whispers.' **138. swart star**, the Dog Star which makes vegetation brown or swarthy. Explain connection here. **139. quaint enameled eyes**. Justify the adjectives. **140. honied showres.** Why 'honeyed'? **142–150. Bring . . . tears.** In this passage notice the aptness of Milton's adjectives. **142. rathe**, an old positive, of which rather (originally meaning earlier) was the comparative. **144. jeat**, jet. **151. laureat herse.** "The hearse was a platform, decorated with black hangings, and containing an effigy of the deceased. Laudatory verses ('laureate') were attached to it with pins, wax, or paste." (Jerram, quoting from Stanley.) Look up the derivation and history of 'hearse,' showing its growth from a harrow to a carriage for the dead.

152–164. 156. **Hebrides**: islands off the west coast of Scotland. **158. monstrous world**, world of monsters. **159. moist vows**, tears and prayers. **160. fable of Bellerus old**, the land where a Cornish giant, Bellerus, was fabled to have lived. Milton seems to have coined this name from Bellerium, the Latin word for Land's End, Cornwall. **161. great Vision of the guarded mount.** Tradition reports that the archangel Michael was once seen sitting on and guarding a Cornish mountain. Here he is represented with his face turned toward the strongholds of Namancos and Bayona, situated in northwestern Spain, opposite Land's End. The poet begs the archangel to withdraw his eyes from Spain and fix them upon the watery grave of Lycidas. **164. Dolphins.** For their sympathy with a poet, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 26.

165–185. A burst of triumph, as the poet realizes that, after all, the grave has no real sting. Like the 'day star,' or sun, which seems to sink into the ocean, this sinking is only to be followed by a glorious resurrection. **165. shepherds.** Who is meant? **166. your sorrow.** Explain. **170. newspangled ore.** Explain this with reference to the sun. **173. might of Him**, etc.: see *Matthew* xiv. 25. **174–175. Where . . . laves.** Put into prose order, noting that the clause modifies mounted. **175. nectar pure.** Why with 'nectar'? **176. unexpressive** (inexpressible) **nuptial song**: see *Revelation* xix. 6–9. **177. kingdoms meek.** Explain the adjective. **181. wipe the tears.** *Isaiah* xxv 8; *Revelation* vii. 7. **183. Genius of the shore.** According to an ancient belief the spirit of any one who was drowned would thereafter guard the place of his death as a protecting 'genius.' Note here and throughout the poem the freedom with which Milton turns from Christian to pagan imagery.

186–193. Observe the calm repose of these last lines — the same placidity that often marks the close of a stirring epic. **186. uncouth.** What is the meaning here? See *L'Alleg.* (5) and note. Who is this 'uncouth swain'? **186–191. Thus . . . bay.** He had been singing this pastoral song all day. **188. quills**, reeds, or oaten pipes of the shepherd. **Their stops** are the vent-holes over which the fingers of the musician play. **But**

why 'tender'? **189. Dorick.** Doric was the rural dialect used by Theocritus and other Greek writers of pastoral poetry. **190. stretch'd out all the hills.** Explain this line. **192. twitch'd.** We can imagine the shepherd drawing his blue mantle around him as he feels the sudden chill of evening. **193. To-morrow . . . new.** What meaning may this line have in reference to Milton's life? Indicate best lines in this poem. (See INTRODUCTION, p. cvi.)

Comment upon the metre and the tone-qualities of ll. 1–14; upon the poetic figures of ll. 103–131, and the derived or memory-images of ll. 132–151. Comment upon the charms of sound-sequence in the stanza of ll. 186–193.

COMUS

The masque, or mask, was a form of dramatic entertainment introduced from Italy into England during the early part of the sixteenth century. We find little mention of it, however, until the time of Queen Elizabeth; but from that period it rose steadily in favor with court and nobility. During the reign of James II the masque attained the summit of its excellence, noteworthy not only on account of the magnificence of its staging and the beauty of its scenic effects, but also from its genuine value as a form of literature. Its rank in this respect was largely due to the scholarly dramatist, Ben Jonson, who, by writing some thirty, firmly established his reputation as the greatest masque writer that England has produced. From his time on the music and dancing, which formed the chief attraction of the earlier productions, were made subordinate to the literary element — the beautiful expression of lofty thought. The chief points of difference between the regular drama and the masque are as follows: (1) The masque is much shorter than the ordinary drama, has much less action, fewer characters, and less character development. (2) It was produced on a very elaborate scale, thus contrasting strongly with the simple stage effects of the Elizabethan drama. The spectacular element, indeed, was not infrequently devised by Inigo Jones, the famous court architect and decorator of Jonson's time; and in many instances the play is estimated to have cost thousands of pounds for a single production. (3) The masque was almost always intended for a special occasion, and was produced as a sort of private theatrical in which the characters were frequently taken by ladies and gentlemen of the nobility. (4) The masque, unlike the drama, is very often concerned with the working out of some hidden allegorical meaning, and therefore is filled with speeches far too long for a drama of action. (5) In the later, as well as in the early masques, music and dancing played a much more prominent part than in the regular drama. (For Drama, see INTRODUCTION, p. xcviii.)

In 1634, when *Comus* was produced, the masque was at its height. The circumstances which led to this particular production were as follows: the Earl of Bridgewater, whom Charles I had appointed Lord President of Wales, called upon Henry Lawes, the tutor of his children and the most accomplished musical composer of the day, to furnish a masque to celebrate his entry upon official residence at Ludlow castle. Lawes thereupon applied

for the words of the masque to his intimate friend, Milton, who had already during the previous year collaborated with him in the production of another masque, the *Arcades*. Lawes seems to have furnished the poet with an account of the event to be graced by the masque, together with the characters who were to take part, and also to have composed its music and attended to its staging. The character of the attendant spirit was taken by Lawes himself — a very interesting fact when we remember his office as tutor in the household; for the part of the lady, whom it was the mission of the spirit to assist, was taken by the fourteen-year-old daughter of the earl. The two brothers were represented by her two younger brothers, Lord Brackley and Thomas Egerton. The names of the actors who took the parts of Comus and Sabrina are not known.

While Ben Jonson justly is considered the greatest English masque writer, *Comus* undoubtedly ranks as the greatest of English masques. Though Dr. Samuel Johnson was entirely correct in saying that, with its long speeches and slow movement, it cannot be deemed a successful drama, this defect represents the sum of its limitations. Judged in respect of its allegory, its pastoral beauties, its lyric strains, its epic flavor, its lofty philosophical tone, its "inevitable" lines or poetic "touchstones," *Comus* must be regarded as one of the most perfect fruits of Milton's genius. The name "*Comus*" was not given to the masque until after the author's death.

The scenes of the Masque are as follows: —

I. First Scene. — A Wild Wood. [1–658.]
   1. The Introduction, or Prologue (1–92). 2. The Abduction (93–330). 3. The Rescuers (331–658).
II. Second Scene. — Palace of Comus. [659–957.]
   1. The Temptation (659–813). 2. The Rescue (814–957).
III. Third Scene. — Ludlow Castle. [958–1023.]
   1. The Presentation (958–975). 2. The Epilogue (976–1023).

1–17. The spirit tells who he is, and whence and to whom he comes. **2. mansion,** as in *Il Pens.* (92), see note. **3. insphear'd**: see *Il Pens.* (88) and note. **4. serene.** For accent, see note on l. 11 below. **7. pester'd,** probably comes from the Fr. *empêtrer*, to shackle a horse while at pasture; hence clogged, encumbered. **pinfold,** a shortened form of pound-fold. *Cf.* pound (for stray cattle), and fold (for sheep). **10. mortal change,** 'mortal' in its radical sense (Lat. *mors*, death). **11. enthron'd,** a dissyllabic word, accented on the penult, as was also 'serene,' l. 4. Milton frequently transfers the accent from the ultimate to the penultimate syllable, in words followed by a monosyllable or by a longer word accented on the first syllable. **sainted seats.** Observe the boldness with which the poet associates the thoughts and images of classical mythology with those of Christianity. See note on *Lyc.* (183). **12. be,** indicative; still so used in parts of England. **13. golden key**: see *Lyc.* (111). **16. ambrosial,** in its radical meaning, pertaining to the immortals. **weeds**: see *L'Alleg.* (120) and note.

18–45. The spirit relates the circumstances which have called him to earth. **20. Took . . . Jove.** For an account of the division of the universe among Jupiter (high Jove), Pluto (nether Jove), and Neptune, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 40. Neptune thus gets not only the sea, but also its islands. **23. unadorned,** *i.e.* not otherwise adorned. **25. By course,** in regular order. **27. this Ile,** Great Britain. **29. He . . . deities.** Instead of consigning this isle to his 'tributary gods,' Neptune has divided it into four parts, and intrusted it to the rule of the descendants of the "blue stained Britons," as Masson suggests. Or, 'blue haired,' like the more usual green haired, may merely refer to the color of the sea. **30. all . . . sun,** Wales. **31. A noblé Peer,** the Earl of Bridgewater. See introduction to notes. **33. An old . . . nation,** the Celts (from whom the Welsh were descended). **37. perplex't,** entangled. For the accent, see note on 'enthron'd,' l. 11. **39. passinger.** As the old spelling suggests, 'passenger' is here used in its radical sense — one who is passing through. *Cf.* note on *L'Alleg.* (91). **44. What . . . heard.** Comus (Gk. *kōmos*, a revel), an insignificant divinity of the village feast, is but rarely celebrated in poetry, either ancient or modern. The genealogy and characteristics here assigned to him are coined by Milton.

46–92. After recounting the ancestry, birth, early life, and magical powers of Comus, the spirit indicates the disguise in which he will himself presently reappear to aid the wandering Lady. **46–50. Bacchus . . . Circe:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 76, 318–320. What characteristics would Comus naturally inherit from each parent? **48. After . . . transform'd,** after the transformation of the Tuscan mariners to dolphins. For this story, see *Cl. M.*, pp. 176–178. **49. Coasting.** What modify? **50. On Circe's island fell,** invented mythology: *cf.* note on *L'Alleg.* (19). 'Circe's island' was Ææa: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 318, or the *Odyssey*, Book X. **51–52. whose charmed cup Whoever tasted.** Analyze this peculiar construction, showing the use of each relative. **53. And . . . swine:** see reference above, *Cl. M.*, pp. 318–320. What is symbolized by this physical degradation? **54. that.** For use of 'that' *cf.* l. 46, and see note on *Il Pens.* (113). **58. Comus.** The name signifies carousal or riotous revelry: see note on l. 44. **60. Celtick and Iberian fields,** *i.e.* France and Spain. **61. ominous,** in its primary sense, full of omens. **65. orient,** sparkling like the sunrise (Lat. *oriens*, rising). **66. drouth of Phœbus,** thirst produced by the sun-god. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 59–61. **67. fond:** see note on *Il Pens.* (6). **71. ounce,** somewhat like a lynx. Note here (1) that the disfigurement, of the head only, is suggestive of a deeper spiritual significance than the mere words would indicate; and (2) that these transformations give fine opportunity for striking effects in the staging of the masque. **74–77. Not once . . . stie.** The saddest part of this degradation is the self-satisfaction which accompanies it. **80. Swift . . . star.** To what does this line owe its beauty? **83. Iris' wooff,** threads running across the texture of the rainbow. For Iris, goddess of the rainbow, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 73. **84. weeds:** see note

on l. 16. **swain**, a reference, in the language of pastoral, to Henry Lawes: see introduction to notes. **86–88. Who . . . woods.** Observe the music of the lines and the dainty compliment to the musician: see note on ll. 494–496. **88. nor of less faith**, *i.e.* no less faithful than skilled in music. **90. Likeliest.** The appearance of a shepherd in these woods would cause no surprise.

93–144. Discuss the rhyme and metre of this passage, showing how it differs from the preceding. Observe the effectiveness of the entry of Comus and his rout, as pictured in the stage direction between ll. 92 and 93. **93. The star.** The evening star, Hesperus or Venus: see note on *Lyc.* (30). **94. top of heav'n.** What does this indicate as to the time of night? **96–97. glowing axle . . . stream.** The ancients believed that the earth was flat, with River Ocean flowing around its borders. Apollo's chariot, having finished its daily journey, sank into this stream, and was each night ferried upon it past the northern regions and around to its eastern 'goal,' whence it arose next morning: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 74, 75. **98–100.** For **slope sun** (its beams sloping from beneath the horizon), **upward beam, dusky pole,** and **other goal,** see the note just above. **105. rosie twine,** roses entwined. **110. grave saws.** What is the meaning and derivation of 'saws'? **111. purer fire.** Fire is the element of which the gods are composed, as contrasted with earth, of which man is made. **112. the starry quire.** The fiction that the stars and planets in their motions make harmony too sweet to be heard by human ears has always been a favorite with the poets. This is "the music of the spheres": see note to *Il Pens.* (13–16) and *cf.* the *Merchant of Venice* in Act V: —

> "There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young eyed cherubins:
> Such harmony is in immortal souls;
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

115. sounds: see *Dict.* **116. Now . . . move.** The 'morrice' is a dance originating among the Moors, whence its name is derived. It was still danced in Milton's time at the Robin Hood and May Day festivals. Show how the metre of these lines suggests the undulating, rhythmic movement of this dance. **121. wakes,** night watches or revels. **125. rights,** rites. **126. 'Tis only . . . sin.** Discuss the ethics of Comus, as shown in this line. **129. Dark-veiled Cotytto,** a Thracian goddess of licentiousness, whose orgies took place only at night. Hence 'dark-veiled,' and hence the next four lines. **131. woom,** womb. **132. Stygian**: see note to *L'Allegr.* (3). **spets,** spits. **135. Hecat'.** For Hecate, the Thracian goddess of witchcraft and darkness, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 84. **139. nice,** over-particular, prudish, squeamish. **Indian steep,** because in the East. **141. discry,** in its radical sense, *i.e.* proclaim (to the Sun, who in turn will "blab" to the whole world).

142. solemnity, in its radical sense: see derivation. **143–144. Com . . . round:** *cf.* with the couplet in *L'Alleg.* (33–34).

145–169. Between ll. 144 and 145, the rout of Comus dances a 'measure,' or 'light fantastic round.' Having by his arts divined the approach of the Lady, he begins to lay his plans against her. **145. different pace.** Observe how this approaching step of the Lady, different morally as well as physically from the dance of Comus's crew, is suggested by a change in the rhyme and metre of the passage. **151–153. I shall . . . Circe:** see note on l. 53. **154. My . . . air.** As stated in the introduction to these notes, the masque, unlike all other dramas of the time, made the greatest use of stage effects. Here is a good instance. As the actor speaks this line, he throws into the air some sort of chemical in powdered form — so light that the 'spongy air' seems to take it up and hold it in suspense. At the same time this powder is ignited, making a bright flash, a 'dazzling spell.' When in his covert (168) he evidently repeats this operation, as shown by the Lady's words in ll. 221–225. **157. quaint habits,** strange attire: see note on *L'Alleg.* (120). **161. glozing,** flattering, deluding. **165. vertue,** power; used here, as frequently, in its radical sense. See derivation. **magick dust:** see note on l. 154 above. **167. gear,** business. *Cf.* "for this gear" *Merchant of Venice,* I, 1, 110. **168. fairly,** softly.

170–229. Give theme and substance of each of the parts of this speech. **175. granges,** barns or granaries. **176. Pan,** the god of shepherds and of rural life in general. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 77, 200. **177. amiss,** in the wrong way. **179. wassailers,** carousers. Give the derivation. **180. inform . . . feet.** Explain this synecdoche. **184. spreading favour of these pines,** an example of transference of epithet, often found in Milton. Cf. note on *Il Pens.* (136). **189. sad votarist:** any sober-minded person who has taken a vow (Lat. *votum*) to make a religious pilgrimage; whence 'palmer.' See note on *Prologue* (13). **190. Phœbus' wain,** literally the wagon of the Sun. **193. ingag'd** (engaged), directed. **195–200. Els . . . traveller.** In this rather extravagant passage, Milton betrays the influence of the artificial later Elizabethan poets. **203. rife, and perfet,** prevalent and distinct. **205. A thousand fantasies,** etc. Lowell terms these lines "that wonderful passage in *Comus* of the airy tongues — perhaps the most imaginative in suggestion Milton ever wrote." The sudden and mysterious silence thus fills the mind of the Lady with all kinds of vague apprehension. Notice the onomatopœia of the passage, particularly in the sibilants of ll. 208 and 209. **212. Conscience,** here a trisyllable. Why? **215. Chastity.** Instead of the usual "Faith, Hope, and Charity," we have here Faith, Hope, and Chastity. This change is significant as indicating the theme of the poem — the praise of abstinence, of self-restraint, of personal purity in word and act. This, to Milton, was almost a religion. **216. ye.** Note the nominative form 'ye,' here used as an objective — a frequent usage in Elizabethan English. **217. Supreme,** here accented on the first syllable. **t' whom.** Pronounce as one syllable. **218. slavish . . . vengeance.** Observe Milton's philosophy here,

viz., God allows evil in his world, only that he may use it as a means of punishment. **222. silver lining.** This has usually been taken to be actually a rift in the clouds. But is it not possible that it is one of the 'dazzling spells' of Comus? The gleam over the tufted grove might easily have been thus caused; and the delusion of the Lady would have already commenced when she conceived the evil spell to be a message from on high. Then, cheated by the 'blear illusion,' she conceives the sorcerer to be a 'gentle shepherd.' See note on l. 154. **228. new-enliv'n'd.** This is a favorite species of compound adjective with Milton, formed from an adverb (though adjective in form) plus a participle. **229. they,** the brothers.

230–243. Study the word-sounds and the metre of this song. **230. Echo:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 206, for the story of Echo and Narcissus. Why does the Lady direct her song to Echo? **231. airy shell.** Echo had faded away until she was only a voice, and, as such, an inhabitant of the atmosphere (*atmo* + *sphere*, meaning airy environment or shell). **232. Meander's margent green,** the green margins or banks of Meander, a river in Asia Minor, noted for its winding course: *cf.* the verb meander. **241. Queen . . . Sphear,** *i.e.* queen of speech or dialogue, derived from (*i.e.* 'daughter of') the 'airy shell' from which she comes. **242–243. So mai'st . . . harmonies,** If thou wilt but aid me, thou shalt hereafter lend the beauty of an Echo (*i.e.* 'resounding grace') to 'Heaven's harmonies' (the "music of the spheres"). See note on l. 112. **242. translated,** in its radical meaning (Lat. *trans* + *latum*, from *fero*).

244–270. Observe how Comus has changed his attitude toward the Lady since he has heard her voice. **244–245. mortal . . . ravishment.** Notice how the poet contrives to compliment his friend Lawes, who wrote the music of the song, and the Lady Alice, who sang it: see note on ll. 494–496. **248. his,** its, referring to 'something holy': see note on *Il Pens.* (128). **250. empty-vaulted.** Explain. **250–251. smoothing . . . smil'd.** 'Silence' has 'wings' which bear the song, thus allowing its soft and caressing cadence ('fall') to smooth the plumage ('down') of the raven, Night, till it is full of quiet content ('smiled'). **253. Circe:** see note on l. 50. **Sirens three.** Classic mythology mentions only two Sirens: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 86, 320–321. **254. flowery kirtl'd Naiades,** having their skirts interwoven or twined with flowers. For Naiads, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 87, 204. **256. prison'd soul:** a prolepsis, as is frequent in Milton. They would make the soul prisoner. **257. lap:** *cf. L'Allegr.* (136). **Elysium.** For this abode of the blessed, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 81–82. **Scylla wept.** Why remarkable? See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 86, 218, 219, 321. **258. barking waves,** because of the barking dogs which helped make up the body of Scylla. **259. fell Charybdis,** the cruel monster of the whirlpool, who seized upon such hapless sailors as were trying to escape Scylla. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 321–322. **260–264. Yet they . . . now.** How do the words of Comus prove the song of the Lady to be on a far higher plane than the songs of Circe and the Sirens? **267. Unless the goddess,** *i.e.* unless thou be the goddess. **268. Pan or Silvan:** see notes on l. 176 and *Il Pens.* (134).

271–330. Here Comus, in his character of shepherd, by proffering his aid in finding the brothers of the Lady, induces her to put herself under his protection. **271. ill is lost that praise,** That praise is lost, unfortunately: *cf.* the Latin phrase *male perditur*. **277–290. What chance . . . lips.** The alternation of speeches of a single line is called *stichomythia*, and is frequent in Greek tragedy. **279. neer-ushering,** *i.e.* if they were attending you closely. **287–288. Imports . . . guides,** *i.e.* Does their loss concern you, except as necessary guides? **290. Hebe's:** see *L'Alleg.* (29) and note. **291. what time,** at the time when: *cf.* the *quo tempore* of the Latin. **293. swink't,** tired from his labor: *cf. Prologue* (531 and 540) and notes. **hedger,** though strictly one who cares for hedges (used everywhere in England as fences), it here, no doubt, refers to any farm laborer. **301. plighted:** see note on *Il Pens.* (57). **312. Dingle,** deep and narrow valley; from the same root as dimple (literally, a little dip). Look up derivation. **dell** (*cf.* dale). How does 'dell' differ from 'dingle'? **313. bosky,** another form of bushy. **bourn,** burn (Scotch), brook, comes from the A.-S. word meaning primarily a spring, and must not be confused with *bourn*, boundary, which is a word of French derivation. **314. ancient,** familiar through long association. **315. stray attendance,** strayed attendants, a metonymy where the abstract is used for the concrete. **317–318. or . . . rowse.** The lark is roosting on its 'thatched pallet' or low nest of straw. For rouse, *cf.* 'begin his flight,' *L'Alleg.* (41). **322. honest-offer'd;** see note on l. 228. **322–325. And . . . named:** *cf.* Spenser, in the *Faerie Queene*, at the beginning of Book VI:—

> "Of Court, it seems, men courtesie doe call,
> For that it there most useth to abound;"

also *Prologue* (132) and note. **326–328. In . . . it.** I cannot be worse off than I am now. **329. square . . . strength.** Proportion my trial to my strength.

331–342. 332. **benizon,** from the same root as benediction, and of similar meaning. **333. visage:** *cf. Il Pens.* (13) and *Lyc.* (62). **amber:** *cf. L'Alleg.* (61). **334. disinherit,** *i.e.* dispossess and take the place of. **335. double night.** Why double? **336. influence,** in its radical meaning. See note on *L'Alleg.* (122). **337. taper.** That this is vocative, *i.e.* nominative by address, is proved by 'thy,' l. 340. **338. rush-candle.** A primitive candle made by dipping rushes in grease. **wicker hole.** A hole in the clay-covered wickerwork, or crossed twigs, of which the lowly hut is made. **341. star of Arcady.** A star in the constellation of the Great Bear. See Arcas in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 94–95. **342. Cynosure.** See note on *L'Alleg.* (80). The Tyrian sailors used to steer by the pole star.

342–358. 344. **watled cotes,** sheep pens made of interlaced twigs. Cote is now found in such compounds as dove-cote. *Cf.* note on *L'Alleg.* (120). **345. oaten stops:** *cf. Lyc.* (33, 88, and 188). **349. innumerous,** innumerable. **351. her,** the personal pronoun used for the reflexive, as frequently in poetry. **355. head.** Syntax? **fraught.** Of what verb is this the perfect

participle, and what is the distinction between *fraught* and *freighted*? **358. savage hunger** or of **savage heat.** Metonymies, abstract for concrete. "The hunger of savage beasts or the lust of men as savage as they." (Newton, quoted by Huntington.)

359–385. 359. **over-exquisite,** over fanciful. 360. **To cast,** to forecast the nature of, etc. 361. **grant they be so,** *i.e.* suppose they do turn out to be what you imagine. 362. **forestall his date of grief,** "cross a bridge before he gets to it." 366. **so to seek,** so at a loss. 367. **unprincipl'd,** unversed. 370. **Not being.** A very rare construction; a nominative absolute with the nominative omitted and its qualifying participle expressed. 373–375. **Vertue . . . sunk.** Possibly Milton has Spenser's line in mind. See in this volume *Faerie Queene* (144). These may be called "inevitable," or supremely poetic lines. Explain why. 375–380. **And Wisdom's self . . . impair'd.** Pattison, in his life of Milton, professes to see in these lines an allusion, perhaps unconscious, to the poet's own life at Horton, where he was living when this poem was written. 376. **seeks to,** has recourse to. 377. **Contemplation,** five syllables for the sake of the metre. Show why 'Contemplation' is Wisdom's 'best nurse': *cf. Il Pens.* (54). 378. **plumes.** Explain the figure. 379. **various bussle of resort**: *cf.* 'busy hum of men,' *L'Alleg.* (118). 380. **all to ruffl'd.** One of the most difficult expressions of the poem. Though Milton uses no hyphen, editors have explained that one may have been intended, thus fixing the meaning as either *all-to* (altogether, or exceedingly) *ruffled* or *all to-ruffled* ('to' being an intensive prefix very common in Old and Middle English). Still another interpretation is made by regarding 'to' as the adverb *too*. Which seems the most probable interpretation? 381–385. **He . . . dungeon.** These are, perhaps, the finest lines of the poem. They are worthy to be included in Matthew Arnold's list of "poetic touchstones." 382. **i' th' center,** of the earth, where all is physical blackness. 385. **Himself is his own dungeon,** a favorite thought of Milton, often repeated in his poems. Explain it fully.

385–407. 386. **musing Meditation.** Explain the metonymy. **affects,** honestly likes; not, as now, pretends to like. 389. **senat-house.** Why is this given as a symbol of absolute safety? 390. **weeds**: *cf.* l. 84; also *L'Alleg.* (120) and notes. 393–395. **Hesperian tree . . . uninchanted eye.** For an account of this tree of the golden apples, and of its dragon guard, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 87. 395. **uninchanted,** incapable of being enchanted. *Cf.* 'unreproved,' *L'Alleg.* (40), and note. 401. **Danger . . . Opportunity.** I cannot believe, says the Second Brother, that any one who is dangerous will close his eyes to his opportunity. 404. **recks . . . not.** I am not concerned. 407. **unowned,** unprotected. Describe and explain the figures of speech (385–407).

407–417. Introductory to the long speech of the Elder Brother. 408. **Inferr,** argue. 409. **without,** beyond. 410–411. **equal . . . event,** where the outcome is in the balance. 413. **squint.** Explain the fitness of the adjective.

418–475. This is the passage in which is expressed the central idea of the masque, the exaltation of chastity or personal purity, a virtue which, as Masson says, "was a cardinal idea with Milton through his whole life, and perhaps the central idea of his personal philosophy in early manhood." **420. chastity**: see note on l. 215. **421. compleat.** For pronunciation, see INTRODUCTION, p. lxvi. **423. unharbour'd**, affording no shelter. **426. bandite.** A word just then entering English from the Italian: hence its form. **mountaneer**, here somewhat like brigand. **430. unblench't**, unfaltering. **431. Be it . . . presumption.** Show the force of the proviso. **433. In fog . . . fen**, the same four elements as mentioned in *Il Pens.* (94). **434–435. stubborn . . . curfeu time.** Ghosts whose sins had not yet been atoned for were popularly supposed to wander from curfew time till dawn; hence unlaid: not yet exorcised. For 'curfew,' see note on *Il Pens.* (74). **436. No goblin . . . mine**, According to the superstition, mines were peopled by black goblins or gnomes. **438. ye**, the regular nominative plural. But *cf.* ll. 216 and 513. **439. old schools of Greece.** Thus the speaker turns from mediæval to classical mythology. **441. Dian**, for Diana, goddess of the chase, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 63–64. **442. silver-shafted.** Explain. On compound epithets, see note on *L'Alleg.* (13). **443. brinded.** Look up brindled, the more common form. **444. pard**. Look up and *cf.* leopard (from Lat. *leo*, lion + *pard*). **445. bolt**, arrow. Explain this interpretation of Diana's bow (441–446), and likewise show how the poet interprets the shield of Minerva (447–452). **447. snaky-headed Gorgon shield.** On the Gorgons and their serpent-covered heads, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 225, 231. For **Minerva**, her shield and its powers, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 56. **449. congeal'd.** For pronunciation, see note on l. 11. **455. lackey**, attend and minister to her. **457. vision.** Determine pronunciation by scansion. **459. oft**, here an adjective, meaning frequent. **461. The . . . mind.** Explain the metaphor here and the thought of ll. 456–463; also the converse of the proposition (463–469), showing how soul elevates body or body degrades soul. Milton bases his thought on a passage in Plato's *Phædo* and on the scriptural imagery, — the body being the temple of the Holy Ghost, *1 Corinthians*, iii. 17. **468. Imbodies, and imbrutes**, becomes material (*i.e.* gross) and brutish. **469. divine**: For pronunciation, see note on l. 11. **474. sensualty.** Observe that this form, now obsolete, is required by the metre. Are any of the lines in this speech worthy to be called supremely poetic, *i.e.* "touchstones" in Matthew Arnold's application of the term? (See INTRODUCTION, p. cvi.)

476–489. 477–480. **harsh, crabbed, dull, nectar'd, crude.** Show the especial precision and propriety with which each of these epithets is used. **482. Methought.** This does not come from the same root as the verb *think*, but from another A.-S. verb *thincan*, to appear. *Me* is a dative like the German *mir*. Hence the verb retains its radical meaning, — it appeared to me. **483. night-founder'd**, *i.e.* swallowed up in night, as a ship might be in the sea. **487. Ile hallow** (I'll halloo). Note that this line, as well as many others (304, 321, 342, 385, 407, 416, 480, etc.), is divided between two

speakers, the words of both being combined to make up the iambic pentameter.

490–512. 491. **iron stakes,** swords. 494. **Thrysis,** a common name for a shepherd in pastoral poetry: *cf. L'Alleg.* (83). As to the character which the spirit assumes, *cf.* ll. 84–85. **494–496. whose artful strains . . . dale.** These lines are intended as complimentary to the musical ability of Milton's friend, Lawes. See introduction to notes. It should be remembered that this masque was written for a special occasion, and that the poet, knowing who are going to take part in its production, is thus able to pay many pretty compliments. *Cf.* ll. 31, 84–91, 244–270, 297–299, 556–562. The pronounced hyperbole is noteworthy. The 'strains' have such art that each wavelet of the brook, as it passes by, holds back to hear them, thus causing succeeding ripples, impelled by their momentum, to 'huddle' or crowd in upon it. The sweetness of the sound even adds to the fragrance of the flowers. **495–512. The . . . shew.** In these lines rhymed couplets are substituted for the normal blank verse. These rhymes suggest music, and therefore aid in the compliment to Lawes. 501. **heir . . . his next joy,** addressed first to the elder, then to the younger son. But some editors think that 'next' means nearest, or dearest, and that both salutations are to the elder brother. 503. **stealth,** in its original meaning of thing stolen. 506. **To,** as compared with. 512. **shew.** Look up the present pronunciation of this word.

513–580. In this passage the Attendant Spirit reveals the plight of the Lady. 513. **ye,** here a dative, though strictly a nominative form: *cf.* note on l. 216. 515. **sage poets,** Homer and Virgil, no doubt, since the subjects afterward mentioned are 'storied' (related) in their epics ('high immortal verse'). 517. **Chimeras.** Look up this fire-breathing monster in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 233. 519. **be:** see note on l. 12. 520. **navil,** centre. 526. **many murmurs mixt,** *i.e.* mixed while incantations were being muttered over it. **pleasing poison.** Explain. **526–530. With . . . face.** Explain the syntax in this passage. For remarks on syntax study, see note on *L'Alleg.* (45). 529. **unmoulding reason's mintage,** a very consistent metaphor. The face is a coin which has been stamped ('charactered') with the image of reason, and the potions of Comus melt or unmould this coin. 530. **character'd,** used in its radical sense, engraved or stamped. The word is accented on the second syllable. *Cf.* for meaning and accent, Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, II, 1, 308. "All the charáctery of my sad brows." **531–532. crofts . . . glade.** "The enclosed fields on the slopes that ascend from this wood in the hollow." (Masson.) 533. **monstrous:** see note on *Lyc.* (158). 534. **stabl'd,** probably in their dens, though some editors interpret it, "which have got into the sheepfold." 535. **Hecate:** see note on l. 135. 539. **unweeting,** an obsolete form of unwitting. 540. **by then.** Supply the relative adverb, making the phrase, by then when, *i.e.* by the time when. 542. **dew besprent.** 'Besprent' is poetic for besprinkled. 546. **pleasing fit of melancholy** is entirely intelligible when 'melancholy' is understood in the same sense as used in *Il Penseroso: cf. Il Pens.* (12) and note. 548. **ere a close.** A close, as a musi-

cal term, signifies the end of a strain. **552. an unusual stop,** previously seen in l. 145. **553. drowsie frighted,** these epithets are curiously used. 'Drowsy' is the normal characteristic of the steeds, since they draw the litter of sleep; while 'frighted' is their temporary condition from hearing the noise of Comus's rout. Some of the editions have *drowsy-flighted* (flying drowsily), and still others *drowsy-freighted* (weighed down with sleep). The student should decide among these three possible readings. **554. close-curtain'd Sleep.** Explain the force of the figure. **555. a soft and solemn-breathing sound:** see ll. 230–243. Explain the force of the compound epithet. **556. Rose like . . . perfumes.** This is one of those rare similes in which the language of one of the senses (as hearing) is applied to another sense (as smell). Explain this figure. **558–560. wished she might . . . displac't.** Silence is willing to cease to exist (*i.e.* 'deny her nature'), provided she may be ever ('still') displaced by such sweet sounds. **560. I was all ear.** Explain and classify the figures of poetry and logical artifice in this and the succeeding lines. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. xliii, xlvii.) **561–562. that might . . . Death,** might bring the dead to life. **565. Amaz'd,** here meaning overwhelmed by fear. **568. lawns:** see note on *L'Alleg.* (71). **572. certain signes.** For explanation, see ll. 644–646. **578. Ye.** Compare this proper use of the word with the two peculiar uses in ll. 216 and 513. It will be seen that the usage in Milton's time had not become fixed.

580–609. 581. **tripple knot.** What is represented by each of the three allies against the Lady? **585. period,** sentence. **586. for me,** as far as I am concerned. **591. most harm,** to be most harmful. **592. happy trial,** fortunate outcome. **594. when,** until. **595–597. Gather'd . . . self-consum'd.** Explain. **598. pillar'd firmament,** the sky, supported, according to the belief of the ancients, on pillars, thus serving as a roof for the earth. **602. let him be girt,** a subordinate concessive clause, though he be girt (surrounded). **603. griesly** (grisly). Distinguish from *grizzly* by looking up derivation and meaning of each word. **legions,** a trisyllable: see note on l. 377. **604. Acheron:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 78. Though strictly a river of the underworld, it is here used to denote the whole region. What poetic figure is this? Explain why 'sooty flag.' **605. Harpyes and Hydras.** Give syntax. For Harpies, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 86. **monstrous forms:** see note on *Lyc.* (158). **607. purchase** (from an old French verb *pour* + *chacier*, to pursue and obtain). Hence, according to the original meaning, the noun 'purchase,' the thing obtained, might stand for a thing secured either by fair means (as in its modern sense) or by unfair means (such as Comus here used). Accordingly the word here means prey, spoil.

609–658. 610. **yet,** the word is equivalent to, I will admit in spite of what I am going to say. **611. stead,** service. **617. As to make,** as to learn the facts which enable you to tell this. **619. a certain shepherd lad.** This is generally considered to be a reference to Charles Diodati, one of Milton's closest friends, whose knowledge of botany is elsewhere testified to and admired by the poet. The subsequent lines (623–628) may easily be

taken to refer to the intercourse between the two young men. The botanist would ask his friend to recite his poetry ('sing,' in terms of the pastoral), and in return would teach him the secrets of his science. The probability of the allusion is strengthened by the fact that Diodati was a physician, and that the plants discussed are referred to as 'simples' (medicinal herbs), 'vertuous' (powerful) plants, 'healing herbs,' etc. **630. me**, a dative, for me. **633. Bore.** Supply a subject for this verb. **634. like esteem'd**, esteemed in the same degree as known, *i.e.* not at all. **635. clouted shoon**, patched shoes, a phrase very common in early English poetry. **636. Moly**, the magical plant by which Ulysses was able to resist the wiles of Circe: see *Cl. D.*, *Cl. M.*, p. 319, or *Odyssey*, X. **638. He**: see l. 630. **Hæmony**. Both the plant and its name are Milton's invention. He doubtless coined the word from *Hæmonia*, the Latin name for Thessaly, land of magic. **640. mildew blast**, *i.e.* a 'blast' or wind, such as produces 'mildew.' **641. Furies'**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 84. **apparition.** How many syllables and why? **645. disguis'd**: see l. 166. **646. Entered . . . spells.** Lime twigs are twigs smeared with bird-lime, a very adhesive preparation, used for catching birds. Explain the figure by which this term is applied to the snares of Comus. **649. necromancer's hall.** Note the terms applied to Comus: 'necromancer,' 'enchanter,' 'magician,' and 'wizard.' **650. Where if he be**: *cf.* the Latin *ubi si sit*. Such Latin-derived constructions introducing the sentence by a relative pronoun or adverb, instead of the more common demonstrative, are very frequent in Milton. **654. menace.** Show whether this is a noun or verb. **655. vomit smoak.** This is told of Cacus, son of Vulcan, in the eighth book of the *Æneid*. **658. bear.** Decide whether this is optative (may some angel bear), or hortative (let some angel bear), or imperative (as in l. 337).

659–690. The first endeavor of Comus to tempt the Lady. **660. alabaster**, a material out of which statues were made: *cf.* the *Merchant of Venice*, I, 1, 84. "Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster." **661–662. Daphne . . . Apollo.** For this story, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 138–140. What is the syntax of 'root-bound'? **664. corporal rinde**: *cf.* 'fleshly nook,' *Il Pens.* (92). **668. be**: see note on l. 12. **671. Brisk . . . season.** Show how images, word sounds, and metre all unite to give freshness to the line. **672. cordial** (Lat. *cor*, heart), tending to cheer the heart, invigorating. **julep**, a sweet drink flavored with aromatic herbs (from a Persian word meaning rosewater). **673. his**, its: see note on *Il Pens.* (128). **675–676. Not that Nepenthes . . . Helena**: see *Odyssey*, IV, 219–230, or *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 309. After the Trojan War, Helen, daughter of Zeus, became reconciled to Menelaüs, and left with him for Sparta. On the voyage, storms drove them upon the shores of Egypt, where they were most hospitably received by the king and queen, Thon and Polydamna. The latter, who was versed in magic, gave to Helen, as she was departing, this sorrow-dispelling drink. **685. unexempt condition**, the 'refreshment' and 'ease' (l. 687) necessary to all mortals, none being exempt. **688. That have been tir'd.** modifies 'you,' l. 682.

690–705. 693. **was.** Why in the singular? 694. **aspects,** here accented on the last syllable, and meaning countenances. 695. **oughly-headed,** ugly-headed. 696. **brew'd inchantments:** see ll. 525–526. 698. **vizor'd falsehood,** "falsehood with its vizor, or face-piece, down, to conceal its identity." (Thurber.) **forgery.** Show how this differs from the present meaning. 700. **lickerish,** not liquorish as printed by many editors, nor even from the same root as liquor. The word means tempting to the appetite. 702–705. **None . . . appetite.** Point out the links in the chain of the Lady's argument.

706–755. 707. **budge doctors of the Stoick furr.** Originally 'budge' meant the lambskin, dressed with its wool, which was used to edge the gowns of scholars. Hence its secondary meaning, as here used, scholastic or solemn. Doctors of the Stoic fur are scholars or teachers who follow and advocate the precepts of the Stoic philosophy. The robes of these scholars would, as a symbol of their scholastic attainments, be trimmed with fur, as suggested in the radical meaning of 'budge.' 708. **And fetch their precepts from the Cynick tub.** Diogenes, the Cynic philosopher, is said to have lived in a tub. Comus makes use of this expression in order to show his contempt for the sect and its doctrines. To understand his attitude, we must remember that the Stoics and their forerunners, the Cynics, despised all pleasures of the senses, and praised the 'Abstinence' which Comus calls 'lean and sallow.' 714. **curious,** dainty or fastidious. 718–719. **in her own loyns She hutch't,** in her underground recesses, she laid up or stored away: *cf.* rabbit-hutch. 722. **freize.** Explain 'temperance' (l. 721) in such a way as to show that it extends to the wearing of this coarse cloth. Look up derivation of 'frieze.' 724. **half.** What is the syntax? **despis'd.** Does this modify 'All-giver' or 'riches'? 728. **Who,** referring to Nature. 730. **earth, air.** Syntax? 733. **forhead of the deep.** Decide whether 'deep' here means the sea or the region under the earth. Take into consideration what 'forehead' would mean in each case, in what way it would be bestudded with stars, and to whom 'they below' refers. 737. **coy:** see note on *Lyc.* (18). **cozen'd,** self-beguiled or cheated. 739–744. **Beauty . . . head.** On these lines Verity says, "They contain an idea which had become a commonplace of poets, *viz.*, that those who possess personal beauty should marry, and through their children enable that beauty to remain in the world instead of dying out." 750. **grain:** see note on *Il Pens.* (33). 751. **sampler,** a piece of needlework designed to show (sample) the skill of the worker. **teize** (tease), to card or comb (the original meaning of the word). 752. **vermeil-tinctured.** Look up derivation of vermilion. 755. **you are but young yet.** Observe the unpleasant alliteration and halting metre. This is one of the very few poor lines in Milton's poetry.

756–799. 756–761. **I had . . . pride.** Most editors take pains to say that these lines are "spoken aside." Would it not be better, however, to consider that the Lady spoke them aloud, contemptuously in different as to whether Comus heard them or not? 757. **jugler.** For similar names for Comus, see note on l. 649. 760. **bolt.** The word is taken from the process

of making flour, where the meal is bolted or sifted out from the bran; **hence**, refine, *i.e.* make subtle or dangerous. **761. her**. To what does this refer? **764. cateres**, feminine of caterer, a provider. **767. spare Temperance**: *cf. Il Pens.* (46). **768–779. If . . . Feeder.** State the Lady's argument clearly, and discuss it as a refutation of what Comus said in ll. 720–736. **773. In . . . proportion.** In reading this line give four syllables to proportion and slur each of the two words preceding it. **775. And . . . thank't**: *cf.* l. 723. **778–779. besotted, base, Cramms, blasphemes.** Explain the peculiar fitness of these words. **780–799. To . . . head.** Discuss these lines as a rejoinder to Comus's speech of ll. 737–755. **780. anow**, enough: *cf. Lyc.* (114). **785. sublime.** For pronunciation, see note on l. 11. **788. And thou . . . know.** A Latin construction for, Thou art not worthy of knowing. **791. dazling fence.** Explain this figure (drawn from fencing). **797. brute**, used in its radical sense (from Lat. *brutus*, dull or insensible). **798. magick structures.** Does this refer to his palace, or, rhetorically, to his pretended arguments? Discuss.

800–813. 803–805. **wrath of Jove . . . crew.** Read the story of how Jove overthrew the Titans and thrust them into Erebus. *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 40. Saturn (Lat.), or Cronus (Gk.), was the leader of the Titans. **805. dissemble**, conceal my discomfiture. **808. Canon laws of our foundation**, the fundamental laws underlying our order, as if Comus were a representative of some religious organization. **809–810. lees and setlings**, unhealthy dregs. **melancholy blood.** Here 'melancholy' is not used as in *Il Penseroso*, but in its entirely radical sense, meaning with its noun 'blood,' filled with a black bile, *i.e.* a disordered bodily condition. **811. streight**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (69).

814–858. 815. **ye should have snatcht his wand**: see l. 653. **817. backward mutters.** By muttering the charm backwards and holding the rod reversed, they might have broken the magic spell. **820. me**: see note on l. 351. **822. Meliboeus**, a name for a shepherd in classical pastoral poetry, *e.g.* Virgil in his *Eclogues*. The allusion is clearly to some writer who has told the story of Sabrina. Some commentators think that the poet is referring to Geoffrey of Monmouth, by whom, in 1147, the legend was first told. (See Geoffrey of Monmouth in the account of the Poetry of Chivalry in this volume, p. 330.) But Geoffrey was not a poet, but a writer of Latin prose, and hence would scarcely have been called 'shepherd,'—the pastoral figure for poet. The allusion is more likely to Spenser (a favorite of Milton, as indeed of all other poets), who has given a version of the story in his *Faerie Queene*. **823. soothest**, truest. **pip't**, played the shepherd's pipe, *i.e.* wrote poetry. **825. moist curb.** Explain why she is said to sway it with 'moist curb.' **826–832. Sabrina . . . course.** Milton, in his history of Britain (1670), has given us the story of Sabrina, as he finds it in Geoffrey of Monmouth. By noting some of the incidents of this version we can explain most of the allusions of this passage. The great grandson of Æneas, Brut, has migrated from Italy to Britain, founding, giving his name to, and ruling over the race of Britons. His son and successor,

Locrine, has married Gwendolen, but by a former love, Estrilidis, has a beautiful daughter named Sabra or Sabrina. In time Locrine divorces Gwendolen and makes Estrilidis his queen. The enraged Gwendolen thereupon raises an army, defeats and slays Locrine, and commands Estrilidis and Sabrina to be thrown into the river, which thereafter is called Severn, from the name of the maiden. **827. Whilom,** of old. **831. Commended . . . flood.** Observe how Milton has, for poetic effect, varied the latter portion of the legend. **834. pearled wrists,** *i.e.* wrists adorned with pearls (said to exist in the Severn). **835. aged Nereus.** For this old river god, father of the fifty Nereids, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 85. **839. porch and inlet,** the mouth, the nostrils, etc., gateways of the various senses. **845. Helping all urchin blasts,** *i.e.* relieving or preventing the mischief done through the blighting influences ('blasts') of mischievous elves. Look up the derivation and various meanings of 'urchin.' Observe that we still use 'helping' in this sense when we say "I could not help it." For 'blast,' *cf.* l. 640. **846. shrewd,** in its radical sense now obsolete, — shrewish or malicious. **852. old swain:** see ll. 822–823. However neither Geoffrey of Monmouth nor Spenser assigns this power to Sabrina. **853. clasping charm:** see ll. 660 and 665. **857–858. This will I try . . . adjuring verse.** The spirit proposes to try both the song (l. 854), found in ll. 859–866 and an earnest entreaty in the name of all of the water divinities, seen in ll. 867–889.

859–889. The 'warbled song' and the 'adjuring verse.' Discuss the metre of both song and address. **863. The loose . . . hair,** Sabrina's flowing hair, yellow, as becomes a river goddess, with drops of water falling through and from it. **865. silver lake,** the Severn. **867–889. Listen . . . save.** It is interesting to know that these lines, originally intended by Milton to be spoken, were probably set to music by Lawes, and sung in recitative by him as spirit, and by the two brothers. The first fifteen lines of the passage illustrate the necessity to the reader of knowing something of classic mythology. These names may all be found in a Classical Dictionary, or in the *Classic Myths*, as follows: **Oceanus,** a Titan, god of the River Ocean (p. 85); **Neptune,** brother of Jupiter and ruler of the sea (p. 85). Also see note on l. 20. **Tethys,** a Titaness and wife of Oceanus (p. 85); **Nereus,** genial old man of the sea (p. 85). Also see l. 835. **Carpathian wisard,** Proteus, who dwelt on the island of Carpathus (p. 86); **Triton,** son of Neptune and trumpeter of the sea (p. 86); **Glaucus,** son of Sisyphus, changed from a fisherman into a sea god with prophetic powers (pp. 217–218); **Leucothea,** otherwise Ino, daughter of Cadmus (p. 219), **And her son,** Melicertes, or Portumnus (p. 219); **Thetis,** mother of Achilles, and best known of the Nereids (p. 277); **Sirens:** (pp. 86 and 320); also see note on l. 253; **Parthenope,** one of the Sirens (p. 321), and **Ligea,** another Siren (p. 464). **873. winding-shell,** the sea-shell used as a horn by this trumpeter of the sea (to wind means to blow). **877. tinsel-slipper'd,** the "silver-footed Thetis" of Homer. **879. tomb.** When Ulysses escaped, the grief-stricken Parthenope is said to have drowned herself. It is fabled that her

body was cast up on the Italian shore at the present site of Naples, which city is called *Parthenope* by Virgil and Ovid. **880. comb.** On this, Kneightly remarks, "The comb belongs to the mermaids of Northern, not to the Sirens of Greek, mythology." **883. nymphs that nightly dance,** the Naiads, *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 87 and 207.

890–921. Sabrina rises and gives aid to the Lady. **892. sliding chariot.** Explain. **893. Thick set . . . green,** the decoration or ornamentation of the chariot, or, perhaps, more exactly, the coloring of the chariot, — a coloring like that which glimmers through the water. **894. turkis,** an obsolete form of turquoise. **895. That . . . strayes.** What does this clause modify and what mean? **902. dear.** Bell notes "that the Spirit takes up the rhymes of Sabrina's song ('here,' 'dear,' 'request,' 'distrest'), and again Sabrina continues the rhymes of the Spirit's song ('distrest,' 'best')." Also observe the metre and rhyme which prevails from this point to the end of the poem — a metre, as Verity points out, "much used in the masques of Ben Jonson and other masque writers, perhaps because it lent itself easily to declamation or musical accompaniment." **904. To undo the charmed bond:** see ll. 852–853. **913. of pretious cure,** modifies 'drops.' **914. Thrice.** Note the magical number. **916. marble venom'd,** envenomed with poison or enchanted. See stage directions after l. 658. **917. Smear'd with gumms of glutenous heat.** The enchantment of the marble seat (as if covered with a sticky gum) is dispelled by the touch of Sabrina's hands (918–919). **921. Amphitrite,** wife of Neptune: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 85.

922–957. The Spirit, after invoking blessings on the goddess, urges the Lady to fly with him to her father's palace. **922. daughter of Locrine:** see note on ll. 826–832. **923. Anchises' line.** Sabrina was the great-great-great-great-granddaughter of Anchises. Prove this. **924. brimmed,** brimming. **927. snowy hills,** mountains of Wales and sources of the Severn. **929. scorch.** To decide the mood of the verb, see note on l. 658. **931. molten crystal,** referring to the clearness of the river. **934. lofty head,** the source of the river, high in the mountains. **935. round,** seems to be an adverb modifying 'crown'd.' **936. upon,** probably also an adverb, used like 'round' of the previous line. **937. myrrhe and cinnamon.** This picture is, of course, fanciful. On the passage above, Masson remarks, "The whole of this poetic blessing on the Severn, involving the wish of what we should call 'solid commercial prosperity,' would go to the heart of the assemblage at Ludlow." **950. His wish't presence.** The Earl of Bridgewater did not assume his post as Lord President of Wales till more than two years after his appointment. **951. swains,** suggesting the introduction of the country dancers, as in the next stage direction. These dances probably formed a sort of interlude or anti-masque between the two scenes, and took place just after l. 957. Note that this line, marking the close of the scene, is a pentameter.

958–975. Two songs of the Attendant Spirit. **958. Back, shepherds, back** — thus breaking off the dances and ushering in the last scene. **959.**

sun-shine holiday: *cf. L'Alleg.* (98). 960. **be**: see note on l. 12. **duck or nod**, characteristic of the country dances. 961. **Other trippings.** Bell assumes this to refer to the "movements of the Lady and her brothers." May it not rather have reference to the court dance or inauguration ball, which may be easily supposed to end the festivities? 963. **Mercury.** For this god and messenger of gods, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 68–69. 964. **Dryades.** For wood nymphs, or 'Dryads,' see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 77. 972. **assays**, trials. 974–975. **To triumph . . . intemperance.** As Bell remarks, "The whole purpose of the poem is succinctly expressed in these lines."

976–1023. The epilogue of the Attendant Spirit. When presented at Ludlow Castle the first twenty lines of this epilogue were given a slight verbal change and presented as a prologue, sung by the Attendant Spirit when first descending upon the stage. 977. **happy climes**, possibly the Elysian Fields of the *Odyssey*. 981–983. **All amidst . . . golden tree.** For an account of the Hesperides, and their guardianship of the tree of the golden apples, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 237. 984. **crisped**, curled, by the wind ruffling the foliage. 986. **Graces**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (12). **Howres**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 51 and 65. 989. **musky**, because laden with perfumes. 990. **cedarn alleys**, the pathways winding through the cedar groves. 991. **Nard and cassia**, aromatic plants often mentioned in the Bible. 992. **Iris there with humid bow.** For the goddess of the rainbow, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 73. 993. **blow**, cause to bloom (here used transitively). 995. **purfl'd**, having its edges embroidered. **shew.** For present pronunciation, see note on l. 512. 996. **Elysian**, heavenly. 997. **true**, sufficiently well attuned. 999. **Adonis.** For the story of the love of Venus for Adonis, and of his death, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 152 and 450. Adonis is here represented as recovering from his wound in this heavenly abode of which the Spirit is telling. 1002. **Assyrian queen**, Venus, from the fact that she was first worshipped in Assyria. 1003–1008. **But far above . . . bride.** Read the story of Cupid and Psyche, her labors and their final happiness, in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 152–161. 'Far above' modifies 'advanced,' which in turn modifies 'Cupid.' 1007. **gods**, governed by the post-positive preposition 'among.' 1010. **blissful**, blessed: see *Prologue* (17). 1011. **Youth and Joy.** This genealogy is of Milton's invention. See remarks on *L'Alleg.* (19). 1012. **now**, supply inasmuch as. **task**: see l. 18. 1015. **bow'd welkin**, the vaulted arch of the heavens. 1017. **corners of the moon**, the horns (Lat. *cornua*). 1018–1023. **Mortals . . . her.** Note this last strong statement of the oft-repeated theme of this masque. Mortals who would rise to the heavens with the Attendant Spirit can do so only by a love of virtue. 1021. **spheary chime**, the chiming or music of the spheres, *i.e.* beyond the stars. See note on l. 112.

1022–1023. **Or, if Vertue feeble were,**
Heav'n itself would stoop to her.

This couplet well sums up the poem. It portrays the action of the masque, for it expresses just what the Attendant Spirit has done. The lines were

always favorites of Milton, as the truest expression of his steadfast confidence in the ever present aid which Heaven gives to him whose ideal is the clean and upright life.

In the study of this poem the pupil should examine certain passages with a view to understanding Milton's employment of poetic figures: others with an eye to his skill in rhetorical and logical artifices. For instance, ll. 513–580 for the former, 706–799 for the second. His artistic use of derived or memory-images may be studied in ll. 859–1023. All lines that appear to be supremely poetic in sound and sense should be marked and discussed. The manner and peculiarities of the blank verse should also be studied. (On all these matters, see INTRODUCTION, pp. xxxix–l, lx, lxix–lxxvi, cvi.)

SONNETS

For general remarks on the sonnet as a verse form, see the INTRODUCTION to this book, p. lxxxv ; also the account of the sixteenth-century pre-Elizabethan era; also the notes on Spenser's Sonnet to Raleigh, and on Wordsworth's Sonnets. Milton wrote in all twenty-three Sonnets, five in Italian and eighteen in English. Of his English Sonnets the first two were written near the end of his college life, in about his twenty-third year; while the other sixteen, composed between 1642 and 1658, were the only poems he wrote during the period of his fierce political strife in behalf of the commonwealth. Of all his poems, these Sonnets are the most intensely personal.

Though the sonnet is a form of verse derived from the Italian, the early English sonneteers, including Shakespeare himself, did not pretend to follow the Italian form. Milton observes the pause between octave and sestet, usual in the strict Italian form, in only seven of his eighteen English Sonnets. Another important rule of the Italian sonnet, *viz.*, that the last two lines must not rhyme, he breaks in only one instance. He follows closely the most common Italian rhyme systems of the sestet, *c-d c-d c-d* and *c-d-e c-d-e*, having in his eighteen English Sonnets seven of the former and five of the latter system. The poet himself constantly refers to his Sonnets as poems in the "Petrarchian stanza."

Sonnet II

Milton took his master's degree at Cambridge, and severed his connection with the University in July, 1632. There has been found among his manuscripts a letter to some unknown friend, undated, but probably written not long after his graduation, in which he replies at some length to the charge that he was wasting his time in aimless study, when he should be devoting himself to the Church or engaging in some other active pursuit. After stating decisively that he has given over all idea of entering the ministry, he concludes, "Yet, that you may see that I am something suspicious of myself, and do take notice of a certain belatedness in me, I am the bolder to send you some of my nightward thoughts some while since, because they come in not altogether unfitly, made up in a Petrarchian stanza which I told you of." The "Petrarchian stanza," or sonnet, which thereupon follows, has

been since entitled, *On his having arrived at the Age of Twenty-three.* As its title indicates, the sonnet was undoubtedly written on or about the poet's twenty-third birthday, *i.e.* December, 1631.

1. **suttle theef.** Why is 'time' called a 'subtle thief'? 5. **semblance.** Milton's delicate youthful beauty was such that he was nicknamed "the Lady of Christ's College." 7. **And . . . appear.** This line is probably coördinate with the preceding line, both lines being in apposition with 'truth.' Owing to my youthful appearance, people do not realize that I am so old, or that I am so tardy in development. 8. **timely-happy spirits indu'th,** *i.e.* that endows (modern form of endue) men more fortunate as regards early maturity. 9. **it,** inward ripeness. 10. **still,** ever. **eev'n.** in proportion to, conforming itself. 13. **All is.** Does this mean, Everything is now thus proportioned; or, All that concerns me is whether, etc.; or is there some other interpretation?

Sonnet XVI

Though this Sonnet was written in 1652, owing to the nature of some of its lines it was not printed until 1694, when allusions to pre-restoration politics were more tolerantly received than during the post-restoration period of Milton's life. Certain of the independent ministry had petitioned a parliamentary committee for state support of the clergy and for other special privileges. Milton saw clearly that this would be only a first step toward the overthrow of religious liberty; and, as Masson points out, the Sonnet "is a call to Cromwell to save England from a mercenary ministry of any denomination, or a new ecclesiastical tyranny of any form."

1–4. Put into prose order. Cromwell had to make his way not only against the enemy in the field, but also against detractors in his own party. 5. **neck of crowned Fortune proud.** "This is an unmistakable allusion to Charles I, expressed in Biblical language. *Cf. Genesis* xlix. 8." (Bell.) Whether or not this is true, the downfall of the Royalist cause is at least referred to. 7. **Darwent stream,** where Cromwell routed the Scots in 1648. 8. **Dunbar field,** where the Scots, in 1650, were again defeated by the Protector. 9. **Worcester's laureat wreath.** In the battle of Worcester, 1651, just one year after Dunbar, the Scots were finally overthrown. Hence the laureate, or laurel, a wreath, crowning Cromwell's final victory. 11. **new foes,** *i.e.* such foes as the independent clergy mentioned above, who were scheming for the establishment of a state Church, and were thus inimical to religious freedom 13–14. **Help . . . maw.** With these lines *cf. Lyc.* (113–118).

Sonnet XIX

Milton became totally blind in 1652. Though it would seem probable that this, his first reference in poetry to his affliction, was written not long after that date, there are reasons for placing it as late as 1655. In Masson's judgment it may have been written any time between these two dates. The title *On his Blindness* has been added since Milton's time.

2. **Ere half my days.** Just one-third of Milton's 'days' were spent in blindness. 3. **And that one talent.** Supply 'how' from l. 1, making the clause the object of 'consider.' Look up the parable of the talents in *Matthew* xxv. 14–30, and show how Milton is applying the story to himself. 6. **lest He returning chide,** still a reference to the parable. 7. **light**: see note on *L'Alleg.* (62). 8. **fondly,** foolishly. 12. **thousands,** *i.e.* of heavenly messengers, or angels.

Sonnet XXII

This was the second of the Sonnets addressed to Cyriac Skinner. As in the case of the Sonnet to Cromwell, it was not published until after Milton's death. The 'three years' day' of the first line fixes the year in which it was written as 1655. Unlike most of the Sonnets, it bore a title on its first publication.

1. **Cyriac.** Of Cyriac Skinner we know little except that he was the grandson of the famous lawyer, Sir Edward Coke; that he was himself a lawyer of some prominence; and that he was an intimate friend, and probably former pupil, of the poet. **clear.** According to Milton's statement elsewhere, his eyes did not externally give evidence of his blindness. 10. **conscience,** consciousness. **overply'd.** The work which Milton did in the cause of the commonwealth was what finally destroyed his naturally weak sight. The allusion is no doubt especially to one of Milton's many prose works during this period, *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio*, published in 1651. 12. **Of which all Europe rings.** The word 'rings' occurs in the earliest printed edition (1694), although it is probably the editor's substitution for "talks," which appears in the original manuscript. 13. **world's vain mask**: *cf. Merchant of Venice*, I, 1, 77–78, "I hold the world . . . a stage, where every man must play his part."

DRYDEN

ALEXANDER'S FEAST

St. Cecilia, a patron saint of music, is supposed to have lived at the beginning of the third century, having suffered martyrdom about 220 A.D. According to the legends which have sprung up about her, she was pure, devoted, religious, beloved of the angels, inspired by and inspirer of music. At some time and in some way — just when or how is uncertain — she had grown to be regarded as music's patron saint, and hence, during a part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one day of each year was set aside by musicians and music lovers to do homage to her memory. How the tradition arose that St. Cecilia invented the organ is a matter of conjecture, as are also the actual facts concerning its invention. The legend of St. Cecilia was first told in English by Chaucer in his Second Nun's Tale.

Alexander's Feast, probably the finest of all the odes written for the St. Cecilia festivals, was composed in 1697, the poet being then in his sixty-

eighth year. Lord Bolingbroke (the lifelong friend of Pope, and the "Mr. St. John" of Thackeray's *Henry Esmond*) has recorded a remark made to him by Dryden: "I have been up all night. My musical friends made me promise to write them an ode for their Feast of St. Cecilia, and I was so struck with the subject which occurred to me that I could not leave it till I had completed it. Here it is, finished at one sitting." Although the poet afterward spent a week or two in revising this first draft, it is probable that it was not altered to any considerable extent. Dryden himself was much pleased with his effort, and is reported to have boasted that "a finer ode had never yet been written and never would be." His earlier poem on the same subject, *A Song for St. Cecilia's Day* (1687), was also a noteworthy production, although much shorter and less ambitious than *Alexander's Feast.*

The most characteristic quality of this poem is found in its onomatopoetic effects both in word-sounds and in metre. It has been said of Dryden that metre, far from being a hindrance to him, was a source of positive freedom; and nowhere is this exemplified better than in *Alexander's Feast.* While reading the poem, the student should note, for each stanza, three things: (1) the kind of music Timotheus is playing; (2) the effect of the music on Alexander; and (3) the way in which the poet, by word-sounds and metrical effects, pictures *objectively* the sound of the music, and *subjectively* and more subtly the resulting mood of the great conqueror. See INTRODUCTION, pp. lxix, lxxvi, for the sound-qualities of verse, and p. lxxxv for the Ode.

Stanza 1. **1–2. Persia . . . son.** 'Philip's warlike son,' Alexander the Great, overthrew Darius and thus conquered Persia in 331 B.C. **3–5. Aloft . . . throne.** By pronouncing these lines slowly and impressively, the reader catches the effect the poet wishes to produce, — the dignified majesty and self-important contentment of the victor. **6–11. His . . . pride.** These longer lines, in contrast with the three preceding, resume a conversational tone — are merely narrative. In irregular verse, like that of an ode, this is apt to be the case with the longer iambic lines. **9. Thais,** a favorite of Alexander, and well-known and beautiful woman of the time. **12–15. Happy . . . fair.** Notice and explain the effect of the repetitions. Finally examine the rhymes of the stanza, observing the change of rhyme system with each new thought of the stanza: thus (1) *a-a-b-b-a*, Alexander and his feast; (2) *c-c-c*, the peers; (3) *d-d-d*, Thais; (4) *e-f-f-e*, Alexander and Thais. What should you judge, from such groupings as these, to be an underlying principle of rhyme variations? Continue this study of rhyme-groupings for subsequent stanzas. What purpose does the chorus of this and the other stanzas seem to serve? What can you say of the onomatopoetic effect of these choruses?

Stanza 2. **20. Timotheus,** a Theban musician of Alexander's time. **26. seats above,** *i.e.* on Olympus. **28. A dragon's . . . God.** In wooing mortals, Jupiter usually took some such form, *e.g.* a swan, a bull, a shower of gold, etc. **30. Olympia,** Olympias, the mother of Alexander. **33. an image,** *i.e.* Alexander. The musician flatters the conqueror by assigning to him the parentage of a demigod. **35. A present deity:** see note on **l. 33.**

37–41. With . . . spheres. Note the self-conscious satisfaction with which Alexander assumes this rôle. Like Jupiter, he will shake the universe by a nod. Note, also, the way in which the iambic dimeter and trimeter lines picture this mood.

Stanza 3. **47–48. The praise . . . young.** Observe the metre of these merely narrative lines. See note on ll. 6–11. For characteristics of Bacchus, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 76. **49–53. The jolly . . . comes.** Show how these lines picture repressed excitement, indicative of approaching Bacchanalian revels. **52. honest** (Lat. *honestus*), handsome, open, frank. **53. hautboys,** the modern oboe. Look up derivation of this word. **54–60. Bacchus . . . pain.** Describe the difference in rhythmical effect between these lines and those just preceding, and show the corresponding difference in mood. What line in this stanza reaches the climax of excitement? Discuss the rhyme system of the stanza.

Stanza 4. **66–68. Sooth'd . . . slain.** Discuss the metrical effect and evident mood of these lines. **70. ardent,** used in its radical sense. See derivation. **72. his, his,** to whom does each pronoun refer? **73. Muse,** strain of music or song. **76. too severe,** why, '*too* severe'? **77. fallen,** etc. Explain the fine effect of this repetition. What mood in the former, and what in the latter, part of this stanza? Trace the rhyme system as in stanza 1.

Stanza 5. **97. Lydian measures.** This music was soft and voluptuous: see *L'Alleg.* (136) and note. **97–106. Softly . . . provide thee.** Observe how the Lydian measure is pictured by the smooth trochaic lines, with their feminine (double) rhymes, liquid sounds, and frequent alliterations. **107–108. The many . . . cause.** Explain the change in metre. See note on ll. 6–11.

Stanza 6. Compare the metrical effects of this stanza with those of stanza 5, — sibilants with liquids, harsh word sequences with smooth ones, irregular line lengths with regular ones, masculine with feminine rhymes, — giving instances of each. Show how these metrical effects picture the respective strains of music in the two stanzas, and the moods of Alexander which these strains arouse. On harsh and easy sequences of sound, see INTRODUCTION, pp. lxix–lxxiii. **132–135. See . . . eyes.** Such was the ancient conception of the Furies. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 84. **138–140. Grecian . . . plain.** With the Greeks burial was all important, since without it their souls could not cross the Styx until after years of wandering. See *Cl. M.*, p. 79. **141. vengeance due.** 'Due' to whom, and why? **150. like another Hellen.** Does this mean simply that Helen was the indirect cause of Troy's downfall, or is there any ground for saying that she may have actually helped burn the city? See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 309. **151. flambeau.** See *Dict.*

Stanza 7. This is the stanza that links the ode to the occasion for which it was written. Observe that, for the most part, it is simple narrative, thus sharply contrasting with the excitement of the preceding stanza. **156–157. Ere heaving bellows . . . mute,** since St. Cecilia had not yet come. See introduction to notes. **162. vocal frame,** the structure ('frame') like a voice, the organ. **164–165. Enlarg'd . . . sounds,** *i.e.* produced sustained

notes, as a reed instrument differs from a stringed instrument in having power of indefinitely prolonging its tones. 170. **She . . . down.** According to some accounts it was the exquisite playing of St. Cecilia, according to others, her spotless purity, that attracted the angel to her. Compare with the conception of this line that of the well-known painting of St. Cecilia.

POPE

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

Lord Petre, a young gentleman of London society, had aroused the anger of Miss Arabella Fermor, through "the trifling occasion of his having cut off a lock of her hair." The "quarrel" extended to the families and friends of both parties, and became so fierce that a Mr. Caryl, friendly to both, suggested to Pope that he ridicule the matter in a "comical" poem, and thus help to end the dissension. The resulting poem, in two cantos, was first printed in Lintot's *Miscellany* (1712) exactly as presented in this volume. For a comparison between this form and the enlarged edition published two years later, see the discussion following the sketch of Pope's life. As to the effect of the poem, it need only be said that Miss Fermor was far from pleased with the notoriety which it thrust upon her, and that she was not reconciled to the offending Lord Petre through its influence.

The Rape of the Lock was called by Pope "an heroi-comical poem." It is really a mock-heroic or mock epic, in which commonplace events are purposely treated in such a manner as to raise them to a plane of false dignity and importance. The poem also incidentally burlesques, or parodies, lines and passages of the serious epics of Greece and Rome. However, it is an error to speak of it as a burlesque. Indeed, to the ordinary reader, unacquainted with Homer or Virgil, the poem has no element of the burlesque at all. But to every class of readers, as Hazlitt has said, it is "the perfection of the mock-heroic, the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly." *The Rape of the Lock* is an "occasional poem" — a poem called forth by some special incident or occasion — and has always been regarded as one of the most brilliant of the kind. *The Rape of the Lock* is, moreover, somewhat like the famous *Spectator Papers* of the same time, a most delightful satire on the frivolities and foibles of the society by which its author was surrounded. (On Epic, Mock-heroic, and Satire, see INTRODUCTION, pp. xciv, cii.)

It is a curious fact that, although Pope within ten years was to receive the large sum of £9000 for his translations of Homer, he was paid for this better, though shorter, production exactly £22, — £7 for this first edition and £15 for the later one.

CANTO I. **1–12.** The Invocation and Exordium. 1–3. **What . . . sing,** a parody from the first two lines of the *Iliad*. The poem is full of these parodies, and has always appealed with especial force to those who have an intimate knowledge of the Greek and Latin poets, and can thus appreciate how Pope "takes off" the stately lines of Homer and Virgil. 3. **C——l.**

Caryl (or Caryll) was a country gentleman of Sussex, for years a friend and correspondent of Pope. See introduction to notes. **4. Belinda.** This name for Miss Fermor occurs in the prefatory motto of the poem, and was substituted by Pope for *Polytine* in the lines of an epigram written by the Latin poet, Martial. **11–12. And . . . men:** *cf. Æneid*, I, 11.

12–34. The heroine of the poem arises and attends a boating party on the Thames. **13. Sol.** The excessive use of Greek and Latin proper names was one of the characteristics of the eighteenth-century Classical school. **15. Shock,** Belinda's lap-dog. **17. Thrice . . . ground.** Knocking against the floor ('ground') with the heel of a shoe or slipper was a customary way of summoning the maid. **18. striking watches.** It is interesting to find that these were invented over two centuries ago. At this point the revised edition added one hundred and thirty lines, introducing the Sylphs, describing Belinda's toilet, and closing the canto. **26. unfix'd as those.** Why 'unfixed'? **33. female:** *cf.* use in *Deserted Village* (287).

35–50. The Baron's designs on a lock of Belinda's hair. **35. Nymph,** Belinda, Miss Fermor. The word is used through the poem to mean maiden. **36. graceful.** Give syntax. **41. sprindges** (springes), snares or slip nooses. **45. Baron,** Lord Petre: see introduction to notes. **50. Few . . . ends:** *cf. Æneid*, II, 390, of which this is almost an exact translation.

51–64. The rites and sacrifices offered by the Baron to 'propitious heaven.' This is a delightful parody on many similar occurrences in Greek and Latin epics. **51. Phœbus:** see note on l. 13. **52. Propitious,** a prolepsis. The Baron's purpose was to *make* heaven propitious. **53. Love,** here, as in l. 39, means Cupid. **54. vast French Romances.** These works were indeed 'vast'; for instance, one of them, *Clelia* (*Clelie*), "appeared in ten volumes of eight hundred pages each." (Hales.) See *Spectator*, No. 37. **55–56. Sylvia** and **Flavia,** evidently two of his 'former loves.' **59. Billets-doux** (Fr. *billet*, a note + *doux* [Lat. *dulcis*], sweet), love letters. Note the spelling. Many editors have the singular, billet-doux, an evident mistake. **63. half his pray'r.** Which half of the petition (l. 62) was granted? **63–64. The pow'rs . . . air:** *cf. Æneid*, XI, 794–795, a close parallel. At this point the enlarged edition adds nearly one hundred lines, showing the preparations of the Sylphs to defend Belinda. This addition concludes Canto II.

65–82. The visit of the boating party to Hampton Court. This begins the third canto of the revision. **66. rising.** Explain. **67. a structure,** Hampton Court, about ten miles west of London, originally built by Cardinal Wolsey in the sixteenth century. **70. foreign Tyrants.** The reference is especially to Louis XIV of France. **71. three realms.** What were they? **72. Tea,** pronounced tāy in Pope's time. Though introduced into Europe a century before this time, tea was still a very expensive article, and was considered a great luxury. **75–80. In . . . dies.** Characterize the conversation. **76. was bit,** taken in, or beaten, at cards. **capotted.** To 'capot' is to take all the tricks in the game of piquet. In the revised edition this line is entirely changed to 'Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last?' **78. screen.** Japan

and Indian screens were then "the rage." **81. Snuff.** The habit of taking snuff had just been formed in England, and was popular even among ladies of fashion. See *Spectator*, No. 344. **supply.** Can the plural verb be justified?

83–104. The intoxication of coffee as an influence on the rash stratagem of the Baron. **85–86. When . . . dine.** These lines show something of Pope's satirical tendency. Croker speaks of them as forming a "repulsive and unfounded couplet." **86. wretches.** In what sense? **88. And . . . cease:** *cf. Æneid*, VII, 170. Here some eighty lines are added in the second edition, describing, in mock-heroic fashion, a game of cards between Belinda and the Baron. **90. berries . . . mill,** coffee, and the coffee-mill in which it is ground. Coffee had been common in England for about fifty years, having been introduced not long after the introduction of tea — shortly before 1650. **91. Altars of Japan.** Japanned stands were very popular in Pope's time. **92. fiery spirits.** What is meant? **93. grateful,** to smell and taste. **94. China's earth,** china ware. **97–98. which . . . eyes.** A sarcastic allusion to the "oracles," or "would-be politicians," of the coffee-houses. **102–104. Scylla . . . Nisus:** see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 219.

105–118. The rape (seizure) of the lock. **107. Clarissa.** To the beginning of Canto V of the revised (1714) edition Pope subsequently added thirty lines, which first appeared in the quarto of 1717. These lines were spoken by "Clarissa," on whom Pope made this annotation, —"a new character introduced in the subsequent editions, to open more clearly the moral of the poem." He seems to forget that he had given Clarissa a part to play in the very first (1712) edition. She evidently represents some friend of Miss Fermor and Lord Petre. **108. two-edg'd weapon:** see note on 'forfex,' l. 115. **109–110. So . . . fight.** Point out the humor of this comparison. **112. engine:** see note on *Lyc.* (130). **115. Forfex,** a Latin word for a pair of shears. **116. divide,** a transitive verb. What is its object? **118. for ever.** Describe the effect of the repetition.

119–142. The anguish of the victim and the exultation of the victor. **120–124. And . . . lie.** Note the extravagance of the mock-epic. What gives these lines their humor? **129. Atalantis.** The *New Atalantis* was a book of Pope's time, full of scandal of court and society, by a Mrs. Manley, who, though a notorious adventuress, was a friend of such literary men as Swift and Steele. **130. small pillow,** a pillow of rich material and design — perhaps something like a sofa pillow — which fashionable ladies used as a support for their heads and shoulders when receiving visits in their bedrooms. This "fad" was copied from France, where at that time it was a way of receiving fashionable morning calls. See the *Spectator*, No. 45. **131–134. While . . . live:** *cf. Æneid*, I, 607–609. **135. date,** *i.e.* time at which it must fall. **137–138. Steel . . . Troy.** For an account of the siege of Troy, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 290–307. What part did 'steel' play in Troy's downfall?

CANTO II. **143–152.** The feelings of Belinda. This begins Canto IV of the revision. **143–144. But . . . breast:** *cf. Æneid*, IV, 1–2. **145–152. Not . . . Hair.** Show what feelings Belinda had in common with

each of these, — 'kings,' 'virgins,' lovers,' etc. 148. **ancient lady**, evidently "old maid." 150. **manteau**, cloak. 152. **ravish'd**: *cf.* l. 48. Here follow in the revision about eighty-five lines, describing the Cave of Spleen.

153–180. 154. **Thalestris**, Mrs. Morley, a friend of Miss Fermor. 158. **bodkins**, pins used by women to fasten the hair. **leads**, used for doing up the hair; just as paper is used in l. 159. 160. **irons**, curling-irons. 166. **Ease.** Give syntax. Meaning of the sentence? 169. **degraded toast.** Meaning? 170. **honour.** Meaning of this word here and in l. 165? How can it be 'lost' in a 'whisper'? 171. **fame.** Meaning here? 174. **Expos'd through crystal.** The Baron evidently intends to have the lock set in a ring. 177. **Hyde-park Circus**, the Ring, or fashionable drive of London. 178. **And wits . . . Bow.** The Bow was the East End, or "city" part, of London — a favorite subject of satire for the fashionable wits of the eighteenth century. See the *Spectator*, No. 34. 179–180. **Sooner . . . all.** Observe the anticlimax and its effect.

181–190. The remonstrance of Sir Plume. 181. **Sir Plume**, Sir George Brown, brother of Mrs. Morley (Thalestris). He was very angry with this liberty which Pope had taken, for the likeness was sufficiently accurate to be easily recognized by his friends. But, as has been often pointed out, Pope was never above taking unwarrantable liberties with private character. 182. **her**, afterward changed to *the*, since she was his sister. 184. **nice conduct.** Twirling the cane, brandishing it in the air, and the like were actions much affected by the fops of the period. Addison ridicules this in *Tatler*, No. 103. **clouded cane**, a cane mottled with dark spots. 185. **With . . . face.** Describe this picture. 187–190. **And thus . . . hair.** What would you infer of the man from his speech? 188. **Zounds.** Derivation of this word?

191–200. The Baron's reply. 191. **again.** How is the word used here? 192. **Who.** What is the antecedent? 195. **honours shall renew.** Explain. 198. **wear**, a transitive verb with its object omitted — a favorite construction in Pope: *cf.* 'divide,' l. 116. 199. **He spoke**, a parody on the frequently recurring *dixerat* of Virgil.

201–231. Belinda's lament. 201. **sorrow's pomp.** Explain. 203–205. **red — head — said.** These lines form a triplet, a very rare thing in Pope. To avoid it, he omits l. 203 in the revised edition: *cf.* l. 319 — afterward omitted for the same reason. 208–209. **Happy . . . seen**: *cf. Æneid*, IV, 657–658, — the lamentation of Dido. 214. **marks**, makes tracks on, *i.e.* where there are no fashionable carriages. 215. **Ombre**, a card game described fully in the third canto of the revised poem. **Bohea**, a kind of black tea, pronounced Bohāy in the eighteenth century. Hence the rhyme. 218. **youthful Lords.** Lord Petre was at that time scarcely twenty years of age. 221. **patch-box.** The wearing of black patches was very common among the ladies of this period. See the *Spectator*, No. 81. 228. **uncouth**, here means ugly. See note on *L'Alleg.* (5). 231. **sacrilegious.** Give the derivation. This concludes Canto IV of the revision.

232–267. The beginning of the struggle. 232. **She said**: see note on

l. 199. **233. But . . . ears**: *cf. Æneid*, IV, 440. **236–237. Not . . . vain.** For the story of Dido and Æneas, see *Cl. D.*, the *Æneid*, IV, or *Cl. M.*, pp. 342–343. At this point thirty lines (the speech of Clarissa) were added to the revised edition. See note on l. 107. **238–245. To arms . . . wound.** These eight lines are overdrawn, even for mock-heroic; yet they have no little comic effect — partly on account of their very extravagance, and partly from their balance with the succeeding eight lines relating a similar combat of the gods. These fine ladies and gentlemen are fighting like "fish wives" — or like gods. **246–253. So . . . day.** 'The combat of the gods is detailed in the *Iliad*, XXI, 272–513. **248. 'Gainst . . . arms.** 'Mars' is the subject of 'arms,' 'Latona' the object of 'against.' Find out why the different gods took sides as they did in the Trojan War. See *Iliad*, *Cl. D.*, or *Cl. M.*, pp. 285, 291. **251. Blue Neptune.** Explain the adjective. On which side of the conflict was Neptune? See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 189, 291. **253. And . . . day.** The 'pale ghosts' are the people of the underworld who are startled at the unwonted light as 'the ground gives way.' **257. One . . . song.** 'In' means in the act of uttering. Which of the two gave utterance to the metaphor and which to the song? **258. living death,** a common metaphor in Milton and other poets. **261. Those . . . killing.** Pope has given a note saying that these were "the words of a song in the opera of Camilla." **262–263. Mæander's flowery margin . . . dies**: *cf. Comus* (232) and note. "The Meander was a famous haunt of swans, and the swan was a favorite bird with the Greek and Latin writers, one to whose singing they perpetually allude." (Professor Hales, in *Athenæum*, April 20, 1889.) Moreover, the swan is supposed to sing most sweetly as it dies.

268–289. The overthrow of the Baron. **268–271. Now . . . subside.** A close parody of Homer's well-known lines in the *Iliad*, VIII, 69–73. See also *Æneid*, XII, 725–727. As a result of this judgment of Jove, the Baron is now doomed to defeat. **277. one finger and a thumb,** between which she held the snuff. **281. re-echoes,** as he sneezes. **282. th' incens'd virago.** Look up original meaning and the derivation of 'virago.' **283. bodkin.** In modern times we may say that her threatened action is equivalent to "stabbing with a hat-pin." **287. leaving you behind,** *i.e.* leaving you alive.

290–309. The disappearance of the lock. See ll. 61–64. **290–291. Restore . . . rebound.** A close imitation of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*, ll. 35–36. **292–293. Othello . . . pain**: see *Othello*, III, 3. Does 'roared' apply well to Belinda, even in mock-heroic? **294. ambitious aims.** What were they and on whose part? **298. must,** force of this word here? **300. Lunar sphere,** the moon. Derivation of 'lunar'? **301. all . . . lost,** *i.e.* trivial or insincere things. Note what they are in ll. 302–309. Pope says that he modelled this passage on the Italian poet Ariosto, — Canto XXXIV, of the *Orlando Furioso*. **302–303. Heroes', Beaus', wits.** The satire is evidently directed against the soldier as well as the fop. Explain. **304. death-bed alms.** Show point of the satire. **306–307. courtier's promises . . . sick man's pray'rs . . . tears of heirs.** Show insincerity of each of

these. **308–309. Cages . . . butterflies.** Pope had little sympathy with scientific studies. **309. tomes of casuistry,** huge books full of learning such as that of the Middle Ages.

310–334. The victory of the Muse. **312. founder,** Romulus, raised after his death to become the God Quirinus: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 89. **313. Proculus,** who declared that he had received a vision from the risen Romulus. **314–315. A sudden Star . . . hair.** Thus the lock became a comet. Look up derivation of comet. **316–317. Berenice's locks . . . light.** Berenice, the widow of Ptolemy III, cut off her hair and hung it up in the temple of Mars, in obedience to a vow. The hair disappeared, and was fabled to have been taken into the heavens, and changed into the constellation which bears her name, *Coma Berenices.* **317. dishevel'd.** Look up derivation and thus explain the use of the word. **318. Beau monde,** the fashionable world (Fr. *beau*, fine + *monde*, world). **Mall.** Pall-mall (pronounced pell-mell), an old English ball game, has given the name 'Mall' to the place where it was played — afterward a fashionable walk in one of the parks of London. **319. As . . . stray** : see note on ll. 203–205. **321–324. Partridge . . . Rome.** Pope says, "John Partridge was a ridiculous star-gazer, who in his almanacks every year never failed to predict the downfall of the Pope and the King of France (Louis XIV), then at war with the English." **322. Galilæo's eyes,** the telescope. Though Galileo was not the original inventor of the telescope, he may be said to have independently invented it, since the instrument he made in 1609 was constructed before he had seen any of the earlier ones. The early improvements, moreover, were almost entirely his. **326. shining sphere,** the heavens. **329. murders of your eye.** Explain. **331. fair suns,** her eyes. **333–334. This Lock . . . name.** A prediction remarkably true. A lock of hair and a poet have immortalized the otherwise unknown 'Belinda.' Probably so trivial an incident has never before or since inspired so brilliant a comic poem.

The student should make a careful study of the heroic couplet as written by Pope, and of his skill in rhetorical and mock-logical artifices. In what respects can Pope's style be compared with Chaucer's? (See pp. xlvii, lxiv.)

GRAY

ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

Gray's *Elegy* has been called "for its size the most popular poem in any language." The reasons for this popularity are not far to seek. The poem deals with a theme of universal interest, to which the poet has contrived to give almost ideal expression. In its felicity of phrase, its melody of verse, its serenity and dignity of movement, there is little left to be desired. Its painstaking and self-critical author was not ready to give it to the world till seven years after it had been begun; and when finally published in 1750, it at once sprang into a position of favor which it has never lost. Professor Gosse says of the *Elegy*, a little extravagantly perhaps, that it "has exercised an influ-

ence over all the poetry of Europe, from Denmark to Italy, from France to Russia." Though the poem in certain conventionalities of style and phrasing undoubtedly shows the influence of the artificial school of Pope, on the other hand its sincerity and human sympathy mark a decided breaking away from the tenets of that school. Instead of the conventional heroic couplet, Gray chose for the poem what was, for that time, the comparatively rare quatrain, with iambic pentameter lines to be sure, but with alternating rhyme. That this verse-form exactly suits the poem, there can be little question.

This *Elegy* forms a good example of composition, simple, but by no means perspicuous. Except with careful reading it is apt to leave an impression, pleasing, but on the whole vague. In the following notes frequent questions have been asked to direct the student to the sequence of thought. It will be well, also, to note the stanzaic groupings which follow.

1–12. 1. **curfew**: see note on *Il Pens.* (74). **parting**, departing, *i.e.* dying. Hence the 'knell': *cf.* l. 89. 4. **And . . . me.** Point out the words in this and the three preceding lines which show the time of day, and the loneliness and hushed quiet of the scene. 5. **glimmering.** Describe the glimmering of a landscape as darkness approaches. 6. **stillness holds.** Explain. 7–8. **Save . . . folds.** What words are onomatopoetic and what is their effect? What intensifies the stillness?

13–28. 13. **elms, yew-tree.** Why these particular trees? 16. **rude,** in what sense? Hales suggests that as the poet stands in the churchyard, it is the poorer people he is thinking of, since the richer are interred in the church, a place of greater sanctity, and greater security for the elaborate tombs. 20. **lowly bed.** Is this literal, or does it mean the grave? 21. **blazing hearth.** What figure? 22. **ply her evening care.** To what household tasks may this line apply?

29–44. Into what two divisions does this passage fall? 33. **boast of heraldry,** pride of birth. Heraldry is the science of recording genealogies. 37. **the fault.** For a suggestion of the meaning, see ll. 49–52. 39. **isle,** aisle: see note on l. 16. 39. **fretted vault,** the arched roof of the church, with ornamentations of fretwork. 40. **pealing**: *cf. Il Pens.* (161). 41. **storied,** on which is inscribed an epitaph or 'story.' The urn, originally a receptacle for the ashes of the dead, is here an ornament for the tomb. For 'storied,' see *Il Pens.* (159). **animated bust,** lifelike statue. 42. **mansion**: see note on *Il Pens.* (92). 43. **Honour's voice,** words honoring the dead. **provoke,** in its radical sense (from Lat. *pro* + *vocare*, to call forth).

45–56. Show relation to preceding passage. 46. **pregnant with celestial fire.** As far as the spark of divinity or native ability is concerned they might have been kings (47) or poets (48). 50. **Rich . . . time.** Explain. **unroll.** The early books were simply *rolls* of parchment. *Cf.* derivation of *volume*. 51–52. **Chill Penury . . . soul.** Explain the figure in detail. Particularly discuss 'noble rage' and 'genial current.' 53–56. **Full . . . air.** What is the application of these two figures to the preceding lines? Do they express the same idea, or do you detect a difference?

57–76. Showing both the limitations and the blessings of this simple country people. 57. **Hampden.** In 1636 John Hampden, a cousin of Cromwell, refused to pay ship money, a tax which the king was levying without the consent of Parliament. The 'tyrant' he 'withstood' was, of course, Charles I. What would a 'village-Hampden' be, and what 'the little tyrant'? 60. **Cromwell.** The personality and motives of the Protector were very much misunderstood in the eighteenth century: see l. 67. 61–64. **Th' applause . . . eyes.** The four infinitives of this stanza are the objects of 'forbad' (65). 62. **threats . . . despise.** To what may this refer and what does 'despise' mean? 63. **To scatter . . . land.** How and in what position can a man 'scatter plenty'? 64. **And read . . . eyes.** Explain in the light of the lines above. 67. **to wade . . . throne:** see note on l. 60. 69–70. **The struggling . . . shame.** Show meaning of each of these lines 71–72. **Or heap . . . flame.** In the time of Gray, and long before, it was often the practice of poets to attach themselves to some rich patron and direct their energies toward pleasing his vanity. 73. **Far from . . . strife.** Show that this phrase modifies 'wishes,' and not 'to stray.' 74. **to stray,** *i.e.* into forbidden paths. 75. **Cool sequester'd vale of life.** Meaning?

77–92. The preceding stanzas (ll. 13–76) really constitute the elegy sung by the poet in honor of those buried in the country churchyard. The lines of this passage refer to the rude memorials which even these humble people have set up in response to that universal instinct which requires something to perpetuate our memory. 77. **ev'n these bones:** *cf.* ll. 37–40. 79. **uncouth:** see note on *L'Alleg.* (5). 81. **unletter'd,** the rude verse of some unschooled, rustic poet. 84. **rustic moralist.** Meaning? Point out the solecism in this line. 85. **prey,** an objective complement, — Whoever gave up as a willing prey to dumb Forgetfulness — this life. 'Prey' refers, not to 'who,' but to life. **dumb forgetfulness.** Discuss the adjective. 89–92. **On . . . fires.** Hales suggests that the four lines of this stanza form a climax, the picture being of a person (1) near death, (2) dying, (3) immediately after death, (4) long since dead. In whichever state he may be, there is the same yearning for loving remembrance. 89. **parting:** *cf.* l. 1 and note. 90. **pious,** prompted by affection and devotion, such as that of a child for a parent, etc. *Cf.* the expression "the pious Æneas." 92. **their wonted fires.** Meaning?

93–116. In these lines Gray imagines himself buried, like those of whom he is writing, in some humble country churchyard. 95. **chance,** by chance. 96. **kindred spirit,** perhaps some other contemplative poet. 101. **yonder.** Note how this word adds to the vividness of the picture. *Cf.* 'yon' (105). 106–108. **Mutt'ring . . . love.** It is with something akin to humor that Gray pictures a poet, — himself, as he would have appeared to this curious observer. 111. **Another came,** another morning. 115. **lay.** The word is used very loosely. What does it properly mean?

117–128. The Epitaph. In this we are given a picture, not so much of the actual Thomas Gray, as of Gray in the assumed character of the writer of this *Elegy*. In other words, we need not expect all the lines of the Epitaph

to be strictly applicable to the personal life or character of the poet. In spirit they undoubtedly do apply. 118. **A youth . . . unknown.** Was Gray known to Fortune ? to Fame ? 119. **Science,** in its radical sense of learning (from Lat. *scientia*). **frown'd not,** *i.e.* smiled. Was this true of Gray ? 120. **Melancholy**: see note on *Il Pens.* (12). 124. **a friend.** What is meant ? 128. **bosom,** in apposition with and explanatory of 'abode.' Why 'dread' abode ?

Compare this *Elegy* with *Lycidas* and discuss the difference between the elegy and the lyric; the elegy and the reflective poem like *Il Penseroso*. What order of poetry is this: presentative, representative, or creative ? Consider the kinds and fitness of the poetic images. What lines may be classed as supremely poetic — inevitable, and why ? (See pp. xxxiii, xxxix, xcvi, xcviii, cvi.)

GOLDSMITH

THE DESERTED VILLAGE

The Deserted Village, published in May, 1770, sprang at once into favor, passing through four editions in the first month. This popularity it has never lost through all the subsequent changes of literary fashion. That the influence of Pope and his school, which had been gradually dying out, is still felt by Goldsmith and his intimate friend and critic, Dr. Johnson, is seen clearly in the work of both poets. The two features of the Classical school here most evident are: (1) the use of the heroic couplet, and (2) the tendency of the poem to be didactic. As regards the latter feature, it need only be said that the best parts of the poem are those in which the author is most the poet and least the teacher of political economy. Many attempts have been made to identify the 'sweet Auburn' of the poem with the home of Goldsmith's boyhood, the village of Lissoy. Undoubtedly the pictures the poet draws are taken from memories of his early surroundings; yet he has used these only as suggestions to his imagination in building up an idealized *Deserted Village*.

1–34. Point out the two chief topics of this stanza, naming explicitly the beauties of scene and the social pleasures mentioned. 1. **Auburn.** Lissoy, thought to be the original of Auburn, was a village in the centre of Ireland. 2. **swain.** A very common word in eighteenth-century poetry. 4. **parting**: see note to Gray's *Elegy* (1). 5. **bowers,** a favorite word with Goldsmith: see ll. 33, 37, 47, 86, 366. 10. **cot,** cottage — its original meaning. 12. **decent**: see note on *Il Pens.* (36). 14. **age.** What figure? 17. **train.** Another of Goldsmith's favorite words. See ll. 63, 81, 135, 149, 252, 320. 337. Few authors are so inclined to repeat certain words as he. 19. **circled.** Show just in what sense these pastimes 'circled.' 23. **still,** ever — its usual meaning in poetry. 25. **simply,** artlessly. 27. **mistrustless.** Picture the self-satisfied smirking of the swain, blissfully unconscious of his real appearance, or of the secret laughter.

35–50. Name explicitly the features of the 'deserted village,' showing

the points of contrast between this and the first stanza. **35. lawn**: see notes on *L'Alleg.* (71). **37. tyrant's hand**: *cf.* 'one only master,' l. 39. The man of wealth is able to buy up large tracts of land, turning them into parks and pleasure grounds, thus dispossessing the original tenant. **40. stints,** limits its productiveness. Why? *Cf.* note on l. 37.

51–56. **52. decay.** In what sense and from what cause according to Goldsmith? **53. may,** *i.e.* it makes little difference. **54. breath,** *e.g.* the word of a king: *cf. Cotter's Saturday Night* (165).

57–74. What change in England do these lines suggest as having taken place? **57. England's griefs.** To what does the poet refer? **58. rood.** How large is a rood? **63. unfeeling train**: see notes on l. 37 and l. 17. **67. want . . . allied,** the desires which riches bring. **72. Lived in each look.** Meaning? **73. kinder shore.** Where, and in what sense 'kinder'?

75–112. **75. parent . . . hour.** Explain the figure. **76. tyrants**: *cf.* l. 37. **78. tangling.** Why better than tangled? **83–96. In . . . last.** A stanza of pure and evidently sincere lyric. **84. and . . . share.** How far was this true of Goldsmith's life? **86. me.** The personal pronoun used for the reflexive. **87–88. To husband . . . repose.** Explain the figure, bearing in mind that a candle in motion burns more rapidly than one at rest. **93–96. as an hare . . . last.** The first of the fine similes which adorn this poem. Explain it in detail. For 'an,' see note on l. 268. **97–112. O . . . past.** Compare with preceding stanza as to beauty and sincerity.

113–136. The village before and after its desolation. Contrast these two pictures. **114. Up yonder hill.** Where is the poet as he hears the sounds? **murmur,** a word which is pure onomatopœia. Look up derivation. **116. softened.** Why? **119; 121. gabbled; whispering,** onomatopœias. **122. spoke the vacant mind,** indicated the care-free mind. Others interpret this as the loud, meaningless laugh of some village idiot. Which interpretation is the better, and why? **124. And filled . . . made.** The nightingale, near at hand, is singing the solo, while the distant sounds are his accompaniment. **136. sad historian.** She is an historian simply from the fact of her being there. How does her presence emphasize the loneliness of the place?

137–162. The village preacher. In creating this picture the poet is thought to have had in mind his father. Compare it with the "poor parson" of Chaucer's *Prologue* (477–528). **140. mansion.** Look up derivation and *cf.* manse. Also see note on *Il Pens.* (92). **142. passing,** an adverb modifying rich, meaning surpassingly. **forty pounds a year.** £40 had been the actual income of the poet's brother Henry, a parson in Ireland. This coincidence, together with the poet's grief over his brother's recent death, inclines us to believe that the brother as well as the father served as a model for this tenderly drawn portrait. **146. By doctrines . . . hour,** *i.e.* he was not what we now term a "popular preacher." **148. to raise . . . to rise**: *cf.* 'to fawn,' l. 145. Until after Goldsmith's time the infinitive was regularly used where we should now prefer a preposition with a participial object

(gerund or gerundive construction). **154. kindred.** In what sense? **157. tales,** nominative absolute before a participle (ablative absolute in Latin). This was a favorite construction with Goldsmith. *Cf.* other instances in ll. 79, 95, 181. **161. to scan:** see note on l. 148. **162. pity . . . charity.** Discuss.

163–192. 164. **And e'en . . . side.** Show just what this line means. **167–170. And as a bird . . . way.** Explain in detail this simile. **172. dismayed,** filled with terrible forebodings. **173. The reverend champion stood.** In these words note the tone of quiet strength. **178. venerable,** in its radical sense, worthy of veneration. How did his looks 'adorn' the place? **179. double sway.** Why 'double'? **182. steady, honest.** Discuss these epithets. **183. endearing wile.** Describe this picture. **189–192. As some . . . head.** Show in detail the application of this simile.

193–216. The village master. The original of this picture is said to be Thomas, or "Paddy," Byrne, an old ex-soldier, who was Goldsmith's teacher at Lissoy. **194. unprofitably gay.** Why 'unprofitably'? *Cf.* Gray's *Elegy* (55–56). **195. to rule:** see note on l. 148. **199. boding tremblers.** They trembled because of their foreboding. **209. terms and tides presage.** He could foretell the dates in which the courts were to assemble (*cf.* terms of court), as well as the times and seasons of religious festivals (as Christmastide, Yule-tide, etc.). **210. gauge,** measure the capacity of barrels; to the villagers an almost incredible accomplishment. **211–216. In . . . knew.** What words of this passage are especially apt in bringing out the humor of the lines?

217–236. The village inn. **217–218. spot . . . triumphed,** *i.e.* the inn: see l. 214. **218. triumphed.** How? **221. nut-brown draughts:** see *L'Alleg.* (100). **222. grey-beard mirth and smiling toil.** Explain these metonymies. **226. parlour splendours.** Explain the epithet. **228. clock . . . clicked.** Note the onomatopœia. **229. contrived,** a participle. **231. use.** The wall doubtless had knot-holes which must be covered. **232. The twelve good rules,** said to have been made by Charles I, were as follows, according to Rolfe: (1) Urge no healths; (2) Profane no divine ordinances; (3) Touch no state matters; (4) Reveal no secrets; (5) Pick no quarrels; (6) Make no companions; (7) Maintain no ill opinions; (8) Keep no bad company; (9) Encourage no vice; (10) Make no long meals; (11) Repeat no grievances; (12) Lay no wagers. **the royal game of goose,** possibly something like the old game of fox and geese. **235. shew,** rhyming perfectly with 'row.' Look up pronunciation in *Dict.* **236. chimney,** fireplace.

237–250. 238. Why 'tottering mansion'? **240. hour's importance.** Meaning? **243. farmer's news.** "The farmer's necessary visits to the neighboring market town would naturally make him the newsman." (Hales.) **barber's tale,** the talkativeness of barbers is an old joke. **244. wood-man's ballad,** evidently a hunter's song. **248. mantling bliss.** Explain the metonymy.

251–264. A contrast between these simple pleasures of the poor and

the conventional and artificial pleasures of the rich. **253. congenial,** in its radical sense. Look up derivation. **256. The soul . . . sway.** Explain and illustrate. **257. vacant,** care-free: *cf.* l. 122. **260. wanton wealth.** Explain the epithet. **262. Toiling pleasure.** Meaning?

265–286. An apostrophe to those who really have the good of England **at heart,** but who, in the poet's opinion, are dazzled by the growing wealth of the country. **267. 'Tis yours,** *i.e.* your duty. **268. a happy.** According to the present usage regarding the indefinite article before aspirated *h*, *a* is used before monosyllables or polysyllables accented on the first syllable, as a hare, a history; in other cases *an* is used, as an historian. **269. loads of freighted ore.** This seems to be the money coming into England in payment for exported goods which ought really never to have left the country. **270. shouting Folly.** Explain the metonymy. **274. the same.** No useful products have been imported. **275. Not so the loss,** etc., for the wealth which has come in (269) serves only to add to the luxury of the rich man, and to enable him to encroach on the lands that are giving sustenance to the poor. See note on l. 37. **276. poor.** Is this the subject or the object of 'supplied'? **279–280. The robe . . . growth.** Thus luxuries, as well as money (269), have come in as equivalent for the necessities so unwisely exported. **281. seat,** *i.e.* country-seat. For such compounds, see note on *L'Alleg.* (120). **282. Indignant . . . green.** Explain. **283–284. Around . . . supplies:** see note to ll. 279–280. It must be admitted that, in the passage above, Goldsmith's ideas on political economy are very crude.

287–302. Do you enjoy this simile more or less than the three earlier ones, and why? **293. solicitous to bless,** anxious to charm. **299. famine . . . smiling land.** Explain the apparent contradiction.

303–308. 308. **bare worn common is denied.** Pancoast defends these statements of Goldsmith by quoting from Lecky's *History of England in the Eighteenth Century:* "Whole villages which had depended on free pasture land and fuel dwindled and perished, and a stream of emigrants passed to America."

309–336. The sorrows of the city's poor. **311. ten thousand.** The stating of a large definite number for a large indefinite number forms a species of synecdoche. **baneful.** Find meaning by looking up derivation. **314. Extorted . . . woe.** Explain. **315–318. Here . . . way.** Both antithesis and parallelism. **316. artist,** artisan. **319. dome,** in its radical sense (from Lat. *domus*, a house). **322. rattling chariots clash.** Show effect of the onomatopœia. **torches,** used before the days of street lights. **330. Sweet as the primrose peeps beneath the thorn.** One of the best lines in all English poetry of nature. **336. wheel and robes of country brown,** spinning-wheel and the plain dress of a country girl.

337–362. In this stanza we see a very prominent trait of Goldsmith — a tendency to let imagination and prejudice supply the place of exact knowledge. He speaks of Georgia as if it were tropical South America, and very probably knew no better. **344. Altama,** the Altamaha, a river in Georgia. **to, in**

sympathy or unison with. 347–358. **Those . . . skies,** an admirable picture of a tropical jungle, but hardly Georgia ! 358. **landschape**: *cf.* this form with 'lantskip,' *L'Alleg.* (70). 359–362. **Far . . . love.** Contrast the quiet beauty of these lines with the horrors of the lines preceding.

363–384. The 'parting day.' 363. **parting**: see note on l. 4. 372. **new found worlds.** To what does the poet refer ? 374. **only.** What does 'only' modify, and is its position correct ? 380. **cot**: see note on l. 10. 381. **thoughtless babes.** Significance of the epithet. 384. **silent manliness of grief.** Compare the grief of the husband with that of the wife.

385–394. Apostrophe to luxury. 386. **things like these.** To what does the poet refer ? 387–388. **How do . . . destroy.** Like an opiate, these 'potions' first seem to soothe and give pleasure, but eventually bring certain ruin and death. 389–394. **Kingdoms . . . round.** Explain this figure in detail. 391. **draught,** of the 'potions' (387).

395–430. The exodus of the 'rural virtues' from England and an apostrophe to departing 'Poetry.' 398–402. **I . . . strand.** These lines form a good illustration of the figure called *vision.* 408. **Still first . . . invade**: see note on *Il Pens.* (46–48). 409. **degenerate times.** This was a very barren period in the history of English poetry. Though Johnson and Gray were living, neither had written for years ; while Burns and Cowper did not write until fifteen years after *The Deserted Village* was published. The poet professes to ascribe this situation to 'degenerate times' in England, during which the Muse was 'neglected and decried.' 412. **My shame in crowds, my solitary pride.** Goldsmith's appearance in public was not imposing. He wrote better than he talked. The actor, Garrick, said of him in his famous mock-epitaph: —

> "Here lies Nolly Goldsmith, for shortness call'd Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel, but talk'd like poor Poll";

but it is more than likely that much of "Noll's" Irish humor escaped his more deliberate English friends. 413–414. **Thou source . . . keep'st me so.** Goldsmith was notoriously one of the most improvident of men. He never learned the value of money, and spent it as fast or faster than he earned it. 415. **nobler arts.** To what arts does the poet refer, and how is poetry a guide by which they excel ? 418. **Torno's cliffs,** *i.e.* the cliffs overhanging the river Tornea or Torneo, between northern Sweden and Russia. **Pambamarca,** a mountain near Quito in Ecuador, South America. 419. **equinoctial fervours,** torrid heat. 421. **prevailing over time.** Discuss. 422. **Redress,** make man forget. 427–430. **That . . . sky.** These lines are said to have been added by Dr. Johnson. Can you detect a difference from the rest of the poem in style ? Show why, according to the poet, 'trade's proud empire' is like an artificial wall, doomed to be swept away, while the 'self-dependent power' of a 'bold peasantry' will forever resist the elements.

Point out in this poem the poetic figures that you consider to be most fitting, and classify them. Compare the idyllic descriptions with those of *L'Allegro,* and the character-sketches with Chaucer's in the *Prologue.* How

do Goldsmith's imagination and humor compare with Pope's in the *Rape of the Lock?* Is the heroic couplet more or less "run on"? (See pp. xliii, xlvii, lxiv.)

BURNS

THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT

This poem was written in 1785, when Burns was on the farm at Mossgiel. As a simple pastoral idyl it is not excelled by many poems of our language. While it does not possess the delicacy and fire of some of the shorter lyrics, it gives noble and sincere expression to what, in spite of his frailties, the poet knew to be a true ideal of Christian manhood. We are told that Burns was led to write this poem because of the vivid impression made upon him by the nightly family worship in his father's household — an experience to which he had been accustomed from a child. As his brother Gilbert records, Robert always "thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, 'Let us worship God,' used by a decent sober head of a family, introducing family worship." Burns's father belonged to the class of which the poem treats, and was, no doubt, to a very considerable extent, the original from which "the cotter" was drawn. In other respects, however, the picture, though typical, is imaginary, and refers to thousands of other Scotch peasant families as well as to that of Burns.

1–9. Give the metre and rhyme of this stanza. See INTRODUCTION, p. lxxxiii, and the notes on *Faerie Queene.* 1. **friend,** Robert Aiken, a solicitor in Ayr, who was a life-long friend and patron of the poet. 2. **No mercenary bard:** *cf.* note to Gray's *Elegy* (71–72). 5. **simple Scottish lays,** the humble Ayrshire dialect which Burns has immortalized. The word 'lays' was used loosely by eighteenth-century poets. *Cf.* Gray's *Elegy* (115).

10–27. 10. **blaws,** blows. The Scotch dialect frequently uses *a* in place of the English *o.* **wi',** with. The final consonant sound is regularly omitted in many Scotch words. *Cf.* o' for of; a' for all; an' for and; youthfu' for youthful. **sugh,** sough: see *Dict.* 12. **frae,** from. **pleugh,** plough. 13. **craws:** see note on l. 10. 14. **Cotter,** the inhabitant of a cot. See note on *Deserted Village* (10). **moil,** toil or drudgery. Look up derivation and successive meanings. 18. **And weary . . . bend:** *cf.* Gray's *Elegy* (3). 21–22. **Th' . . . glee.** The Scotch dialect seems to be especially adapted to the fit expression of simple home life and its emotions. Try to turn these words into English, and note their loss in effect. 21. **stacher,** toddle with short tottering steps, as a child. 22. **flichterin,** fluttering. 23. **wee bit ingle,** cosy little fire or fireplace with its cheerful blaze. 24. **wifie.** The *ie* is a diminutive, frequently met with in Scotch, suggesting endearment. 26. **carking,** fretting or worrying. 27. **toil,** pronounced tīle.

28–54. 28. **Belyve,** presently. 30. **ca',** drive. **herd,** herd the neighbors' cows. **tentie,** attentive. 33. **youthfu':** see note on l. 10. **e'e,** eye. 34. **braw,** fine, handsome. 35. **deposite.** Note accent as shown by rhythm. **sair-won,** hard-earned. 38. **spiers,** asks, inquires. 40. **uncos,** news or unknown

happenings, from uncouth (unknown). See note on *L'Alleg.* (5). **44. Gars auld claes,** makes old clothes. **amaist,** almost. **45. a' wi':** see note on l. 10. **46–54. Their . . . aright,** the father's 'admonition' (45). **47. younkers,** youngsters. **48. eydent,** diligent. **49. jauk,** fool away their time. **51. duty.** The word here evidently refers to their regular morning and evening prayers. *Cf.* the next three lines.

55–72. 59. wily. Explain the unusual sense in which this word is used here. **62. hafflins,** half. **63. Weel . . . rake.** Explain this line as a happy ending to the little drama of the stanza: **64. ben,** into the inner or living room — one of the two rooms of the typical Scotch cottage. **66. no ill ta'en.** Compare, as to effect, with some English equivalent, such as well received. **67. cracks,** chats, trying to make the youth "feel at home." **Kye,** cows. **69. blate an' lathfu',** bashful and shy or sheepish. **70. wiles:** *cf.* 'wily,' l. 59. **72. bairn,** another word inimitable in English. *Cf.* l. 28. **lave,** rest, *i.e.* other girls.

73–90. Compare these and other English stanzas of the poem with those of the Scotch dialect. Which do you enjoy the more, and why? **75. I've paced . . . round,** a confession of the poet, only too true. **78. cordial,** heart-reviving drink. **vale:** *cf.* the expression "vale of tears." **81. thorn,** the white thorn or hawthorn.

91–117. 91. board: see *Dict.* for the history of this word. **92. halesome parritch,** wholesome porridge, probably of oatmeal. **93. soupe,** milk. In general it means any liquid used as food. **hawkie,** cow. **94. 'yont the hallan,** beyond the partition wall, where, in the case of the more humble cottages, the cow was kept. **96. weel-hain'd kebbuck,** well-kept cheese. **fell,** sharp, tasty. **98. garrulous,** almost over-talkative in her attempt to be entertaining. **99. towmond,** twelvemonth. **sin' lint was i' the bell,** since flax was in full blossom. **100. supper,** a nominative absolute before a participle. *Cf.* the ablative absolute in Latin. **103. ha'-Bible,** originally the Bible kept in the "hall" or chief room of the house. Later the term came to be applied to the large family Bible of every household, the original force 'ha',' disappearing. **104. bonnet,** the blue woollen cap of the Scotch peasant. The word 'bonnet' as a term for a man's head covering, though now restricted to Scotland, was once common in England. *Cf. Lyc.* (104). **105. lyart haffets** (half-heads), gray temples, the locks about his temples being mixed with gray. **106. strains.** Determine the syntax. The reference seems to be to the *Psalms.* **107. wales,** selects or chooses. **108. Let us worship:** see the introduction to these notes. **111. Dundee,** an old Scottish psalm tune, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century. **112; 113. Martyrs; Elgin,** also favorite Scottish psalm tunes. **113. beets,** adds fuel to, *i.e.* the psalm feeds the flame already in their hearts. **114. lays:** see note on l. 5. **115. Compar'd . . . tame.** This line has been sometimes cited to illustrate the Scotch prejudice of Burns. However, it seems to show nothing more than a feeling of the inadequacy of 'Italian trills' as sacred music. The poet acknowledges the *beauty* of Italian music in the expression 'tickled ears.'

118–162. 119. **Abram . . . high**: see *Genesis* xv. 120–121. **Moses . . . progeny**: see *Exodus* xvii. 121. **Amalek**, the tribe that attacked the Israelites in the desert. 122–123. **Or how . . . ire**: see *II Samuel* ix. 13–17. 122. **royal bard**, David. 124. **Or . . . cry**: see *Job* iii. 125. **Or . . . fire**, the prophecies in the book of *Isaiah*. **wild, seraphic fire**. Explain. 126. **holy seers**, the Prophets. **tune the sacred lyre**. Explain the figure. 127. **Christian volume**, the New Testament. 128–130. **How . . . head**, The four *Gospels*. 131. **How . . . sped**, the *Acts*. 132. **The precepts . . . land**, the various *Epistles*. 133–135. **How he** (St. John) **. . . command**, the book of *Revelation*. See especially chap. xviii. 133. **Patmos**, an island in the Mediterranean, whither John was banished, and where he saw the visions recorded in *Revelation*. 135. **Bab'lon's doom**. This has been interpreted to signify the downfall of injustice and oppression, evils which were notoriously characteristic of Babylon. Observe that in these two stanzas the poet gives a running sketch of the whole content of the Scriptures. 138. **Hope . . . wing**. The poet is loosely quoting this line from Pope's *Windsor Forest*. 140. **uncreated rays**. Meaning? 144. **circling Time**. Explain. 150. **sacerdotal stole**. Look up these words, and explain. 156. **parent-pair**, a quaint and expressive term.

163–189. 165. **Princes . . . kings**: *cf. Deserted Village* (53–54)—lines which Burns probably had in mind. 166. **An . . . God**. This famous line is from Pope's *Essay on Man*. 167. **certes**, an archaic word, meaning truly. 176–177. **And . . . vile**: *cf.* with Goldsmith's arraignment of luxury in the *Deserted Village*. 180. **And . . . isle**. Explain this fine figure. 182. **Wallace**, one of the Scottish national heroes, leader of the Scots when they tried to gain their freedom in 1297. 188. **still**, ever, always. **patriot-bard**: *cf.* with this hopeful prayer the despondency of Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*, **where he sees poetry leaving the land.**

TAM O' SHANTER

While a certain Captain Grose was compiling a work on the *Antiquities of Scotland*, he was requested by Burns to include a picture of Alloway Kirk, the burial place of the poet's father. Grose consented on condition that Burns should write a witch poem to be published with the drawing of the Kirk, since it had always been connected with stories of witches. The result was *Tam o'Shanter*, written in 1790, and published in Grose's *Antiquities of Scotland* in 1791. The original of the poem is said to have been a tenant of Shanter farm (hence 'Tam of Shanter'), Douglas Graham by name, a character in many respects a fit model for the picture of Tam. Sharing the honors as an original for the story was Graham's tailless gray mare.

It is said that the poem was written in a single day. Many, including Burns himself, regarded it as its author's best work. Although it pretends to be nothing more than a jolly tale, it shows dramatic force and real poetic power. The briskness and fun are subserved by the lively tetrameter line.

The motto of the poem is that used by the early Scotch poet, Douglas, to preface his translation of the sixth book of the *Æneid*.

1–12. 1. **chapman,** pedler. **billies,** fellows (used rather contemptuously). 2. **drouthy,** thirsty. 4. **tak the gate,** take the road, depart. 'Gate' here means road and is an entirely different word from the *gate* of a fence. 5. **bousin at the nappy,** boozing on strong ale. 6. **fou,** full. **unco,** extremely. 7. **Scot's miles.** The Scotch mile is longer than the English mile by several hundred yards. 8. **mosses,** marshy places. **slaps,** holes in wall or hedge.

13–16. 13. **truth,** objective complement after 'fand.' Tam found this to be a truth. 14. **ae,** one. 15. **wham,** whom, used instead of which. See note on *Cotter's Saturday Night* (10).

17–32. 19. **tauld thee weel.** This is one of those inimitable Scotch expressions that are almost impossible to render in English. **skellum,** good-for-nothing scoundrel. 20. **bletherin,** chattering, jabbering. **blellum,** idle talker. 23. **ilka,** every. **melder,** grist of grain. Formerly, whenever the farmer needed meal or flour he took his grist of grain to the mill to be ground for him. 24. **siller,** money. 25. **ca'd a shoe on,** shod. 27. **Lord's house,** the ordinary Scotch term for a church. 28. **Kirkton Jean,** Jean who lived in the church town, or 'kirkton.' The original of the character is supposed to be a certain Jean Kennedy, who kept a public house in Kirkoswald. 30. **Doon,** a river near Burns's home in Ayrshire. 31. **warlocks,** wizards, men supposed to be in league with the Evil One. 31. **mirk,** darkness. 32. **Alloway's auld haunted kirk.** This old church, now a roofless ruin, and deserted even in Burns's time, stood only a very short distance from the poet's birthplace.

33–36. 33. **it gars me greet.** It makes me weep. For 'gars' *cf. Cotter's Saturday Night* (44). 36. **despises**: *cf.* 'despising,' l. 82.

37–58. Here the story begins. 37. **ae**: *cf.* l. 14. 38. **unco**: *cf.* l. 6. Note Tam's perfect enjoyment. 39. **ingle**: *cf. Cotter's Saturday Night* (23). 40. **reaming swats,** foaming glasses of new ale. 41. **Souter,** shoemaker. 46. **ay,** continually. Why? 51. **rair,** roar. 54. **nappy**: *cf.* l. 5. 55. **lades,** loads. Discuss the comparison between the 'minutes' and the 'bees.'

59–78. Here, as in the *Cotter's Saturday Night,* Burns drops the broad Scotch for the polished English, the sharp contrast heightening the effect of both. Discuss each of these four similes showing the respects in which pleasures are like 'poppies,' 'snowflakes,' the 'borealis,' and the 'rainbow.' 67. **tether,** hold back. **tide**: see note on *Des. Vil.* (209). 68. **maun,** must. 69. **key-stane,** the central or topmost stone of an arch. Hence of 'night's black arch,' the 'keystone' is midnight. 75. **speedy gleams.** What is referred to? 77–78. **That night . . . hand.** Tam might also have known it, and would have feared accordingly, had he been more sober.

79–104. A recital of the uncanny spots which Tam must pass. 79. **mear,** mare. 81. **skelpit,** rode on quickly, scurried. **dub,** puddle. 82. **despising,** utterly indifferent to. 83. **Whiles,** at times. 85. **whiles . . . cares.** Picture Tam's half-drunken caution. 86. **bogles,** spectres or evil spirits: *cf.*

bogie. **88. ghaists and houlets**, ghosts and owls. **90. smoor'd**, smothered. **91. birks**, a clump of birch trees. **meikle stane**, big stone. **92. brak's neck-bane**, broke his neck bone. **93. whins**, patches of furze: see *Dict.* **cairn**, pile of stones. **95. aboon**, above. **98. doubling storm.** Explain the adjective. **99. The lightnings . . . pole to pole**, in Tam's excited imagination. **103. bore**, crevice.

105–114. **105. John Barleycorn.** Scotch whiskey. **107. tippenny**, twopenny ale. Even this makes us bold. **108. usquebae**, whiskey. **109. swats sae ream'd**: *cf.* l. 40. **110. Fair play**, only give him fair play. **boddle**, a small copper coin, equivalent to twopence. **111. right sair astonish'd.** The delightful humor of this line is well-nigh untranslatable.

115–142. The sights that Tam saw. **116. cotillion**, here accented on the last syllable: see *Dict.* **brent new**, brand-new. **117. strathspeys**, a lively Scottish dance, but somewhat slower than a reel. **119. winnock-bunker**, window-seat. **121. towzie**, shaggy, unkempt. **tyke**, dog, cur. **123. screw'd**, pressed or squeezed. **pipes**, bagpipes. **gart**: *cf.* gar. *Cot. Sat. N.* (44). **skirl**, scream (the regular word used for the noise of the bagpipes). **124. dirl**, ring, tremble with the noise. **125. presses**, clothes-presses. **127. cantrip**, trick. **sleight**, an obsolete adjective meaning cunning or dexterous. **129. heroic Tam.** Why is he called 'heroic'? **130. haly table**, the communion table. **131. gibbet**: see *Dict.* **airns**, irons. **132. Twa . . . bairns.** These two babies, only a span long (literally nine inches), according to the old belief, had gone to Hell because they had died before being christened. Hence the appearance of their tiny bones amongst those of thieves and murderers. **134. gab**, mouth. **140. stack to the heft**, stuck to the handle.

143–179. **143. glowr'd.** How does the word differ here from its usual meaning? **144–147. The mirth . . . cleekit.** Observe how perfectly the rapid movement of the lines keeps pace with the increasing excitement of the dance. **cleekit**, swung around by joining hands. **148. carlin**, old woman or witch. **swat and reekit**, reeked with sweat. In a dozen lines, here omitted, the ugliness of the old witches is emphasized. **161. Lowping**, leaping. **flinging**, wildly dancing. **crummock**, a staff or stick with a crooked handle often used by an old woman or witch. **163. kennt**, knew. **fu' brawlie**, very well. **walie**, strapping, fine-looking. **165. core**, an obsolete form of corps. **166. kenn'd**, the participle of the verb whose past tense is 'kennt' (163). **168. perish'd**, caused to perish. **169. shook**, probably means threshed out the standing grain. **meikle**, much: *cf.* l. 91. **bear**, barley. **171. cutty sark**, short garment. **Paisley**, a Scottish town noted for its linen manufactories. **harn**, coarse linen. **174. vauntie**, proud of it. **176. coft**, bought. **177. twa pund Scots.** A pound Scots was worth about forty cents.

179–205. **179. maun**: *cf.* l. 68. **cour**, recover. **181. lap and flang**: *cf.* l. 161. **184. een**, eyes. **185. glowr'd**: *cf.* l. 143. **fidg'd**, fidgeted. **fu' fain**, very moist. He was working hard. **186. hotch'd**, moved about awkwardly or uneasily. **187. ae caper, syne** (then) **anither**, objects of some

such expression as having witnessed. **188. tint,** lost. **193. bizz . . . fyke,** bustle out angrily. 194. **byke,** hive. **195. open,** a hunting term, meaning to bark on scenting the game. **pussie,** here a hare being hunted; the 'mortal foes' are the dogs. **200. eldritch,** unearthly, ghastly.

201–224. 201–208. **Ah . . . cross.** How does the apostrophe to Tam and to Maggie emphasize their predicament? **201. fairin,** reward, originally a present given at a fair. **brig,** bridge: *cf.* the "Brig of Turk" in *Lady of the Lake.* **207. may toss,** in defiance. **208. A running . . . cross.** It is an old superstition that evil spirits or witches are powerless to cross a running stream. **210. fient a tail,** never a tail. **213. ettle,** design or intention. **214. wist,** knew. **217. hale,** sound, entire: *cf.* "hale and hearty." **217. carlin:** *cf.* l. 148. **218. scarce a stump.** As a matter of fact, it is said the prototype of Maggie lost her tail through the work of jokers, while she was outside of the tavern, patiently waiting for her 'droughty' master. The original of Tam, however, always held that the loss of his poor mare's tail was due to the witches of Alloway Kirk. See introduction to these notes.

WORDSWORTH

TINTERN ABBEY

This poem shares with the *Ancient Mariner* the distinction of forming by far the most noteworthy portion of the *Lyrical Ballads.* It is not only one of the best poems Wordsworth ever wrote, but is, in the opinion of many critics, one of the best poems ever written. Professor Saintsbury, in his *History of English Literature,* expresses this opinion as follows: "Perhaps twice only, in *Tintern Abbey* and in the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality,* is the full, the perfect Wordsworth with his half-pantheistic worship of nature, informed and chastened by an intense sense of human conduct, of reverence, and almost of humbleness, displayed in the utmost poetic felicity. And these two are accordingly among the great poems of the world. No unfavorable criticism on either has hurt them, though it may have hurt the critics. They are, if not in every smallest detail, yet as a whole, invulnerable and unperishable. They could not be better done."

Wordsworth has this to say concerning the composition of *Tintern Abbey:* "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol. It was published almost immediately after" (in the *Lyrical Ballads,* 1798).

As will be noted, the poem is in blank verse. Since there are no stanzaic or "paragraph" divisions to distinguish units of thought, — such as are found in the blank verse of Milton, Thomson, or Tennyson, — we have attempted in these notes to indicate the natural divisions.

1–22. 1. **Five years.** From this we may determine the poet's age on his

former visit to the Wye. **3–4. These waters . . . springs.** The Wye rises near Mt. Plinlimmon in Wales, and flows south one hundred and thirty miles into the Severn. Tintern Abbey is a famous ruin in Monmouthshire. Note the onomatopœia in these lines. **5–8. cliffs . . . sky.** Describe the picture. **12. this season,** July. **16–22. farms . . . alone.** Note how the seclusion is accentuated by details of description. **16. sportive wood.** Why 'sportive'?

22–49. Wordsworth shows how the memory of his former visit has influenced him during the past five years: (1) ll. 25–30; (2) ll. 30–35; (3) ll. 35–49. **24. As . . . eye.** Explain. **29. purer mind.** What does this mean? **30. feelings.** Syntax? What are 'feelings of unremembered pleasure,' and how are they like the 'unremembered acts,' l. 34? **38–40. In which . . . world.** What is the mood of these lines? In what sense is the world 'unintelligible'? **42. affections,** the emotional in man as contrasted with the more coldly intellectual. **43–49. the breath . . . things.** This may be described as a state of spiritual yet mystical exaltation — a state where the soul of man seems to rise above its bodily limitations and come into direct communion with the Divine, where the mysteries of life are solved. The remembrance of the 'beauteous forms' of nature, the poet claims, leads him into this 'blessed mood.' Consider carefully the fitness of the imagery here and elsewhere in the poem, and determine the names of the poetic figures. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. xxxix–xlvii.)

49–57. The solace received from memories of the Wye. **51–52, shapes Of joyless daylight.** Note the oxymoron (INTRODUCTION, p. xlviii). To what does he refer?

58–65. 60. **Sad perplexity,** as he tries to make the actual scene before him conform to his memory-pictures of the past five years. **64–65. life . . . years.** Explain, in the light of the poet's former experience.

65–83. His attitude toward nature at the time of his former visit. Describe it. On the poetic use of memory-images, see INTRODUCTION, p. xlii. Exemplify here. **65. so,** refers to what? **73–74. The coarser . . . gone by.** In this parenthesis is hinted a still earlier attitude toward nature — the boy's animal joy in mere living. **75–80. To me . . . love.** Here the passion for nature was entirely sensuous — full of 'aching joys' (oxymoron again) in the sights and sounds about him. **81–82. remoter . . . supplied.** A suggestion of the poet's present and maturer attitude toward nature.

83–102. The recompense for having lost his former 'dizzy raptures.' *Cf.* the similar passage in the *Ode on Immortality* (176–187). **88–93. For . . . subdue.** Explain this first compensatory gift. With the last three lines *cf.* ll. 184–185 of the Ode. **91. The still, sad music of humanity:** see INTRODUCTION on poetic touchstones, and point out others in this poem, justifying your choice. **93–102.** The second and greater of the 'gifts' (86). Through nature and in nature the poet sees God. An eloquent and artistic exposition of pantheism, a doctrine that strongly attracted Wordsworth in his earlier years. God's dwelling is in nature and 'in the mind of man,' *i.e.* these things are but different expressions of God; the totality of them *is* God. The

poet seems to have still held to this belief, though in a somewhat modified form, when he wrote the *Ode on Immortality*. 100. **A motion and a spirit.** Syntax, and significance of the words? 101. **thinking things,** 'the mind of man,' l. 99. **objects of all thought,** *e.g.* nature.

102–111. 102. **still.** Does this mean always or even yet? 106–107. **both . . . perceive.** The poet here defines his conception of nature. It is partly material, yet partly ideal — projected from his mind, created by his 'eye and ear.' Though partly objective it is also partly subjective. Nature is not the same to all beholders, because they "see it with different eyes." 107–111. **well pleased . . . being.** Explain carefully each of these metaphors, showing in what sense nature is 'anchor,' 'nurse,' 'guide,' 'guardian,' 'soul of moral being.'

111–134. But even if the poet were without the comfort of these *maturer* thoughts, he would still be able to call back his *former* pleasures, through the companionship and inspiration of his sister. 112. To what does 'thus' refer? 115. **dearest Friend.** Dorothy Wordsworth, who devoted her whole life to helping and inspiring her brother. She was herself a woman of fine intellect and real poetic insight. 121–134. **and this . . . blessings.** What blessings does the poet feel that nature is able to confer, and against what can she make us proof?

134–159. 134. **Therefore.** What thoughts does this word recall? 137–139. **in after years . . . pleasure.** Describe Wordsworth's sister in the light of these lines, and of ll. 116–119. 140. **mansion,** in its radical sense (Lat. *manere*). 148–149. **gleams Of past existence,** *i.e.* the poet's own former existence: see ll. 116–120. 149–159. **wilt . . . sake.** Note the peaceful conclusion. In this respect *cf. Lyc.* (186–193) and note.

ODE ON INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

This poem, in many respects the greatest of English odes, was written, partly in 1803 and partly in 1806, during Wordsworth's residence at Grasmere. The difficulty of the poem is in part due to profundity, but more to the fact that it is the record of experiences and reasonings shared by few besides the writer himself. In speaking of this poem, Wordsworth says: "Nothing was more difficult for me in childhood than to admit the notion of death as a state applicable to my own being. I used to brood over the stories of Enoch and Elijah, and almost persuade myself that, whatever might become of others, I should be translated in something of the same way to heaven. . . . With a feeling congenial to this, I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in, my own immaterial nature. Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality."

The poet then takes this feeling of his childhood, which he professes to

believe all other children share (?), as a proof, or at least an 'intimation' of an eternity of the soul's existence, not only beyond this life, but also previous to its so-called "birth" into this earthly phase of its being. The soul which enters the body of the babe has come direct from heaven; it remembers its former home; and this accounts, according to Wordsworth, for the child's instinctive attitude toward nature, — the handiwork of God. The soul, moreover, after its earthly existence, is destined to go back to that heaven whence it came; and thus is explained the poet's early instinctive attitude toward death. The ode as a whole well illustrates that conjunction of ideal, real, and æsthetic, which has been emphasized in the INTRODUCTION to this volume, p. cv, as essential to poetry of the highest kind.

I. What two experiences are suggested in this stanza? **4. celestial light,** because the soul was fresh from God.

II. Show the relation between this stanza and the latter half of Stanza I. **16. glorious birth.** What does this mean as applied to the sunshine? **18. there hath passed.** What is this glory that has passed away?

III. A stanza in which the poet proceeds upon the theory that he has only *imagined* the loss recited in Stanza II. In this stanza and the first fourteen lines of the next he tries to convince himself that nature means the same to him as she has always meant; that he understands and appreciates her as fully as he has ever done. **19–22. a thought of grief.** Expressed in ll. 9 and 17–18. **23. timely utterance.** This 'utterance' is found in ll. 24–51. **24. I again am strong,** *i.e.* I am determined to convince myself that I am strong. **25. The . . . steep.** Explain this fine line, showing its effect upon the poet's fresh determination. **28–36. The winds . . . boy.** Discuss the metrical effect of these lines. Note how they rise to a metrical climax coincident with the course of the poet's endeavor to persuade himself that nature is still to him what she used to be. What is meant by the 'fields of sleep' l. 28?

IV. What does the poet continue to do in the first half of this stanza? See note on Stanza III; but note that the very repetitions found in ll. 24, 26, 40–41, 42, and 51 indicate that he is more than half-conscious of the futility of his attempt at self-delusion. **51. I hear, I hear, with joy I hear.** But just as he reaches this second climax of attempted self-delusion, knowing that it is in defiance of his better wisdom, his eye happens to rest on a specific tree, a field, a pansy. **52–58. But . . . dream.** The moment of disillusion. While talking of nature in general he has been able to keep up his self-deception; but as soon as he looks upon this and the other definite object that his eyes have beheld in childhood, he is forced to admit that his 'timely utterance' has been in vain; that now he sees no longer with the direct vision of childhood, but as "through a glass, darkly." **57. visionary gleam.** Does this refer to ll. 24–50 or to the visions of youth, which now are gone? Discuss. **58. the glory and the dream.** Discuss as above. Also decide whether 'glory' and 'dream' refer to the same or to different things.

[Thus far the poet had presented his problem: What has become of the

experiences of my childhood? Why have they passed from me? The student must bear in mind that at this point the poem was laid aside for over two years. The added stanzas present a solution of the problem stated in the preceding stanzas. Re-read the introduction to these notes, and endeavor to comprehend the very explicit title of the poem, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood.*]

V. Here is pictured the gradual fading of the glories, the disappearance of which had been lamented in the earlier portion of the poem. **59. Our . . . forgetting.** The philosophy of the poem is succinctly stated in this line; but 'birth' must be understood, not as the moment of entering this world, but as the whole process of becoming "of the world" — the development from our physical birth to our maturity. The rest of the stanza is but an expansion, in detail, of its first line. **60. our life's Star.** Why is our soul thus designated? **67–77. Heaven . . . day.** Note the four stages of our development, and the gradual disappearance of the 'clouds of glory.' Discuss, in this and the other stanzas, the fitness of the poetic figures, and determine their kinds. The student of poetic discrimination will find here and elsewhere in the ode noble examples of the "touchstone" or inevitable line. Discover and discuss: see INTRODUCTION, pp. cvi–cviii.

VI. A hint at an explanation of how we have come to throw away so precious an inheritance. But Earth does not act thus through carelessness, or through a wilful desire to thwart our highest happiness. She knows nothing of these visions, *can* know nothing of them; and so, after her own standards of happiness, blunderingly, yet not without tenderness, she tries to give pleasure to the child intrusted to her care.

VII. Simply an expansion of Stanza VI. Earth's method of weaning her foster-child from his divine inheritance is by interesting him in phases of her own existence. By imitating these, he inevitably grows into and becomes a part of the world and its conventionalities. **87. A six years' Darling.** Wordsworth took as the model for the pictures of this stanza Hartley Coleridge, the little son of his friend, the poet. **pigmy.** Look up derivation. **91–108. See . . . imitation.** Is it true that we tend to become that which we imitate; and, if so, what bearing does this fact have upon the problem of the poem? **104. "humorous stage."** "stage on which are exhibited the humors of mankind; that is, according to the Elizabethan sense of the word, their whims, follies, caprices, odd manners." (Hales.) *Cf.* Ben Jonson's use of the word in the title, *Every Man in his Humour.*

VIII. Notice to whom the apostrophe of these lines is addressed as indicated in the latter half of the stanza. **109–110. Thou . . . immensity.** How does his 'exterior semblance' 'belie' his 'soul's immensity'? **111. best Philosopher.** In what sense is he this? **112. heritage.** What is the heritage which he still keeps? **Eye among the blind.** Explain. **113. deaf and silent.** Give the syntax and the significance of these words. **114. Haunted.** What does this modify? **113–114. eternal deep . . . eternal mind.** What is meant by these? **116. do rest.** Note the force of this. To him a heritage of

eternal truth has descended, which, when lost, no lifetime of thought or labor can replace. Why, then (124–129), is he so willing to give up this birthright for the "mess of pottage" which the world offers? **118. lost.** What does this modify? **of the grave,** *i.e.* total or absolute darkness. **120. Broods . . . Slave.** Explain the simile and the metaphor. **124. provoke,** in its radical sense (Lat. *pro,* forth + *vocare,* to call).

IX. Note again the title of the poem, since the title expresses that for which this stanza is a song of thankfulness. The poet has, it is true, forever lost 'the glory and the dream' of his childhood; but in the *recollection* that this glory had once been his, he has attained to a truth far more precious than the unreasoning possession of his former memories, heaven-derived though they were. He has learned that truth possesses value just in proportion as it is worked out through reason; that this is *growth,* and growth is what makes life worth living. **130. embers,** our adult years. **136. most worthy.** Not a superlative here. It means very worthy; worthy enough in its way. **142–143. obstinate questionings Of sense:** see introduction to these notes, where the poet tells his own experience. **147. High instincts.** Show how these also are 'intimations of immortality.' **152. the fountain light of all our day.** In what sense? **154–156. make . . . Silence,** 'to make our noisy years' (why 'noisy'?) seem only moments when compared with the eternal life of the soul — thus going to prove immortality. **162–168. Hence . . . evermore.** Hence in these, our later years, though the visions of our childhood are gone forever, our souls, by reasonings based on memories of the former existence of those visions, 'have sight of that immortal sea which brought us hither.' As far as the argument is concerned, this may be regarded as the end of the poem.

X. Observe the return to the theme of the opening stanzas. Note the firmer and surer tone now that all temptation toward self-delusion has passed. The poet can afford now to admit his loss, since he has found for it rich compensation. Indeed, it is really no loss; for 'What has been must ever be' is the lesson of the 'years that bring the philosophic mind.'

XI. Still in reference to the opening stanzas, showing the poet's attitude toward nature in his later life. Note the tone of quiet reflection, marking the end of the spiritual struggle and suggested by the smooth pentameter line. How does the metre of this stanza compare with that of preceding stanzas? Look up, in the INTRODUCTION to this book, the subject of the ode, pp. lxxxv, xcvii. **190. Yet,** even now, as truly as before. **191–192. delight . . . sway.** What 'delight' does he mean, and in what sense has he come under a 'more habitual sway'? **200. race,** contest on the race course; against what, and what palms of victory has he won? **201–204. Thanks . . . tears.** Note the gentle cadence of the verses with which this true poet and lover of nature in its deeper and holier meanings brings this poem of stress to a close. The last two lines are an example of the poetic touchstone, to be carefully considered and never forgotten.

ODE TO DUTY

The *Ode to Duty* was written in 1805 and published two years later. Its lofty tone, its splendid imagery, its deep seriousness, its noble conception of the beauty of service — all mark it as a poem which could scarcely have been written by any other English poet, save possibly Milton. It is a poem which will bear many readings and much study, for its thoughts, though on the surface apparently simple, are really as deep as the foundations of the universe. As regards the form of the poem Wordsworth has said, "This ode is on the model of Gray's *Ode to Adversity*, which is copied from Horace's *Ode to Fortune*." In the *Ode to Duty* we see a side of Wordsworth quite distinct from that shown in *Tintern Abbey* and the *Ode on Immortality*.

1–24. 1. **Stern Daughter of the Voice of God.** By the voice of God the poet possibly means conscience — the power of judging right from wrong, the consciousness of duty. Discuss this and show in what sense Duty is the 'daughter' of this Voice. Conscience, however, may be synonymous with Duty; if so, what is the 'Voice of God'? 3–8. **Who . . . law.** How may we conceive of Duty as a 'guide,' a 'rod,' a 'victory,' a 'law'? 7–8. **From . . . humanity.** In what sense can Duty do this? 9–16. **There are . . . cast.** What kind of people does the stanza describe? Compare the type of character sketched in these lines with that portrayed in the sestet of the sonnet, *It is a Beauteous Evening, Calm and Free.* 12. **genial sense of youth,** kindly impulse. That closeness to God which makes it natural to do right without any conscious attempt to follow Duty. 17–24. **Serene . . . need.** Does this third stanza relate to a different class of people, or to the same class as the preceding? In ll. 17–20 the poet is imagining some future age when mankind is sure to do right from the sheer love and joy of doing it. Observe 'will be' (17 and 18) and 'even now' (21). 22. **not unwisely bold.** Explain. What are the rhyme and metre of the stanzas of this poem? Discuss the quality and sequence of vowel and consonant sounds: see INTRODUCTION, pp. lxix–lxxvi.

25–40. 25–32. **I . . . may.** What has been the poet's past experience? Upon what has he relied? 26. **No sport . . . gust.** His transgression has not been wanton or careless. 33–36. **Through . . . thought.** An expression of the sober earnestness of his determination. 37. **unchartered freedom**: *cf.* l. 27. What other lines besides 37 may be regarded as touchstones? Quote and justify your choice. 39–40. **My hopes . . . same.** What is meant by these lines?

41–56. 44. **smile . . . face.** In what sense has Duty a smile upon her face? 45–46. **Flowers . . . treads.** What possible facts in human experience are here touched upon? 47–48. **Thou . . . strong.** Duty is Law, and Law controls the universe. 49. **humbler functions,** humbler than what? 50–56. **I myself commend . . . live.** Contrast in detail with ll. 27–31. 55–56. **The confidence . . . live.** How can Duty do these things? 56. **Bondman,** *i.e.* let me live as thy Bondman. In what sense?

SONNETS

See the previous discussions of the form and history of the sonnet in the INTRODUCTION, p. lxxxv, the account of sixteenth-century poetry, and the notes on the sonnet under Spenser and Milton.

The first place among English sonnet writers may safely be assigned to Wordsworth. Not only has he surpassed others in the number which he has written, — between four and five hundred, — but he has also produced some which have rarely, if ever, been excelled. During the eighteenth century the sonnet had been almost altogether neglected, and it is largely to Wordsworth that its rehabilitation is due.

London, 1802

This sonnet on Milton was named (as was often the practice of Wordsworth) from the place and time of its composition. In dignity of expression it is not unlike some of the best sonnets of Milton himself. The octave expresses a dissatisfaction with the condition of England, to which Wordsworth frequently gave utterance. The sestet evidences a fine appreciation of the solitary grandeur and the steadfast devotion to duty which constitute the personality of Milton.

Composed upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802

In this sonnet the poet treats of the great city almost as if it were an object of nature. The octave is made up of a simple objective description of the scene before him. The sestet is more subjective, giving the mood arising from this survey. Where is the theme of this sonnet first announced or suggested? What attributes of the scene before the poet most strongly move him? What emotions are raised and developed in the sonnet, and where is the climax of emotion? What is the 'heart' in l. 14?

"It is a Beauteous evening, Calm and Free"

Wordsworth says of this sonnet that it was "composed upon the beach near Calais in the autumn of 1802." It is certainly in some respects one of the finest he ever wrote. The octave is descriptive; the sestet brings in the human element. Point out the biblical allusions and show their application. Compare l. 14 with l. 67 of the *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, and from this starting-point compare the sestet with the similar thought developed in the ode.

"The World is Too Much with Us"

This sonnet, written in 1806, is in many respects an echo of *Tintern Abbey*, in which we find its heart-sick weariness with the 'fretful stir unprofitable, and the fever of the world.' It will be noted that there is here a

less distinct separation between octave and sestet than in the other sonnets. In the octave the poet shows how we have wantonly put ourselves out of harmony with nature. In the sestet he suggests a superior excellence in the simple creed of the Greeks. What are the meaning and the syntax of 'sordid boon' (4)? Explain the figures of speech in this sonnet, and classify them. For 'Proteus' and 'Triton' (13 and 14), see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 86. Whether Wordsworth really means what he says in ll. 9–10 is worth consideration.

"Scorn not the Sonnet"

This was one of the last of Wordsworth's sonnets, being written in 1827. The poet prefaced it by a statement that it had been "composed, almost extempore, in a short walk on the western side of Rydal Lake." It is perhaps the most notable of the numerous sonnets which have been written upon the sonnet. It is worthy of note that the poets here mentioned were among the first of the sonnet writers in their respective tongues. Petrarch and Dante were the great Italian poets of the fourteenth century. Tasso was also an Italian, two centuries later. Camoëns was a Portuguese poet, contemporary with Tasso. The sonnet in the hands of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Milton has already been discussed in earlier pages of this book.

COLERIDGE

THE ANCIENT MARINER

Both Coleridge and Wordsworth have left circumstantial accounts of the origin of *The Ancient Mariner* and the general plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which the poem first appeared. The importance of Coleridge's poem and of the *Lyrical Ballads* as a whole justifies a somewhat extended quotation from each poet.

In his *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge says: "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbors, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry: the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of imagination. The sudden charm which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be in part, at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being, who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life;

the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which it was agreed that my endeavors should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth, sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief, for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. . . . With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*."

Of *The Ancient Mariner* Wordsworth has said: "In reference to this poem I will here mention one of the most noticeable facts in my own poetic history and that of Mr. Coleridge. In the autumn of 1797, he, my sister, and myself started from Alfoxden pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Lintoun and the Valley of Stones near to it; and as our united funds were very small, we agreed to defray the expense of the tour by writing a poem to be sent to the *New Monthly Magazine* set up by Phillips the bookseller, and edited by Dr. Aiken. Accordingly, we set off, and proceeded along the Quantock Hills toward Watchet, and in the course of this walk was planned the poem of *The Ancient Mariner*, founded on a dream, as Mr. Coleridge said, of his friend Mr. Cruikshank. Much the greatest part of the story was Mr. Coleridge's invention; but certain parts I suggested; for example, some crime was to be committed which should bring upon the Old Navigator, as Coleridge afterwards delighted to call him, the spectral persecution, as a consequence of that crime and his own wanderings. I had been reading in Shelvocke's *Voyages* a day or two before, that, while doubling Cape Horn, they frequently saw Albatrosses in that latitude, the largest sort of sea-fowl, some extending their wings twelve or thirteen feet. 'Suppose,' said I, 'you represent him as having killed one of these birds on entering the South Sea, and that the tutelary spirits of these regions take upon them to avenge the crime.' The incident was thought fit for the purpose, and adopted accordingly. I also suggested the navigation of the ship by the dead men, but do not recollect that I had anything more to do with the scheme of the poem. The gloss with which it was subsequently accompanied was not thought of by either of us at the time, at least not a hint of it was given to me, and I have no doubt it was a gratuitous afterthought. We began the composition together, on that to me memorable evening; I furnished two or three lines at the beginning of the poem, in particular: —

"'And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.'

These trifling contributions, all but one, which Mr. C. has with unnecessary scrupulosity recorded, slipped out of his mind, as well they might. As we endeavored to proceed conjointly (I speak of the same evening), our respective manners proved so widely different that it would have been quite pre

sumptuous in me to do anything but separate from an undertaking upon which I could only have been a clog."

The poem, thus begun in the middle of November, 1797, was not finished until the end of the following March. It seems to have outgrown the proportions it was originally designed to possess; and, instead of appearing in the magazine for which it was at first intended, it formed an important part of the *Lyrical Ballads* — published in the summer of 1798. It proved a very great puzzle to contemporary critics, and the reviews of it were unsparing of condemnation. Wordsworth ascribed the failure of the *Lyrical Ballads* to the insertion of the unlucky poem, and Coleridge even proposed to withdraw it from publication. All of which merely goes to prove that a poet may be without honor among his own people.

"The versification," as Wordsworth has remarked, "is harmonious and exquisitely varied, exhibiting the utmost powers of the ballad metre and every variety of which it is capable" (see INTRODUCTION, pp. lv, lxxxi, xcii). To appreciate the harmony and melody of the verse, we need only compare it with any of the old English ballads of similar, but less artistic, poetic form. The normal stanza has four verses of alternating iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter. The trimeter lines are rhymed; the tetrameter lines usually not so, though the absence of rhyme in these lines is generally compensated for by an internal rhyme in one or both. In some instances the normal stanza is enlarged to a stanza of five, six, or even nine lines — and always with a distinct heightening of poetic effect.

PART I. **1–20.** **2. one of three**: see ll. 588–590. **3–8. By . . . din.** Observe that the guest has at first no idea of delaying. Trace and explain the several steps by which we see him finally pass entirely into the mariner's power. **11. loon,** a good-for-nothing fellow. **12. Eftsoons,** at once; an archaic word to lend color to the poem. Find similar archaic expressions. **15–16. and listens . . . will**: see Wordsworth's account of the poem in introduction to these notes. **18. chuse**: see note on l. 12.

21–40. Observe the two parts of this division. How does the background of the wedding feast add to the æsthetic effect? **22–24. drop . . . top,** evidently dropping below the horizon, and, hence, first losing sight of the objects nearest sea-level. The lighthouse seems to be *on* the hill. Note the order in which he sees these objects on returning, ll. 464–467. **25. sun . . . left.** In what direction were they going? **37–40. The . . . Mariner.** Observe that every line of this stanza is a repetition of a preceding line. This tendency to repetition is often seen in ballads. On the refrain, see INTRODUCTION, p. lxxix; on rhetorical figures like repetition, p. xlix.

41–62. **45–50. With . . . fled.** Show in detail the points of likeness in this comparison of the ship to one 'who pursued . . . still treads,' etc. **51–54. And now . . . emerald.** Where was the ship at this time? Notice throughout these stanzas the beauty, simplicity, and strength of the poet's descriptions. Not a word too much or too little; it is all a clear-cut, distinct picture. **55–62. And . . . swound.** Describe this scene and show its probable effect on the sailors. **62. swound**: see note on l. 12.

63–82. 63. **Albatross.** What is the derivation of this word? **67. eat,** the obsolete participle. **71. And . . . behind.** In what direction were they going now? **76. vespers nine,** *i.e.* for nine evenings. See derivation of 'vespers.' Show how the action of the mariner is made more revolting by the greeting accorded to the albatross (65–66) and its fondness for the crew (73–74). Why, then, did he kill the bird? Does this offence merit the punishment which follows?

PART II. **83–106.** 83–86. **The Sun . . . sea.** *Cf.* ll. 25–28. **87–90. And . . . hollo.** *Cf.* ll. 71–74, and see note on ll. 37–40. 98. **uprist,** an obsolete form: see note on l. 12. **99–102. They . . . mist.** Show how the sailors' approval of the ancient mariner's act really makes them participants in the crime. Were they in any respect even more culpable than the mariner?

107–130. A tropical calm. 109. **to break.** Does this infinitive express purpose or result? 111–112. **hot, copper, bloody.** Justify the use of these adjectives. 113. **Right . . . stand.** What does this show as to the location of this scene? 115–119. **Day . . . day; Water . . . water.** Show the effect of these repetitions as picturing the mood of the mariner. 120. **And,** *i.e.* and yet, in spite of the water. 123–126. **The . . . sea.** What is the mariner's attitude toward nature in these lines? Show in this and succeeding stanzas the evidence of approaching delirium. Discuss this distress in the light of Nemesis (*Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 72). 128. **death-fires,** mysterious lights, sometimes called corpse candles, supposed to be seen over dead bodies, or to foreshadow the death of him who sees them. What was probably the real cause of the phenomenon? 129. **witch's oils.** Why does the mariner use this comparison? 130. **blue.** Syntax?

131–142. 132. **the Spirit:** see the marginal gloss, and *cf.* ll. 402–405. 133. **fathom.** Syntax? 139. **well-a-day:** see note on *Eve of St. Agnes* (111). 141–142. **Instead . . . hung.** Consider whether this is to be taken literally or figuratively. Observe that the albatross is the sign of the mariner's sin; while his religion taught that the cross was a symbol of *deliverance* from sin. What, then, would this action mean to him? Note also that each "Part" of the poem except the last ends with an allusion to the albatross, or the crime, or the penance. What is the purpose of this device?

PART III. Into what two divisions may this part be separated? Does there seem to be an allegorical meaning in this and succeeding portions of the poem? Study the poem in the light of the three following views; show which seems most probable, or whether there is still a fourth interpretation: (1) that the poem is intended to be taken with childish or imaginative faith as you would take any story containing a supernatural element; (2) that it is to be taken as an allegory, like *Pilgrim's Progress* or the *Faerie Queene;* (3) that it is to be taken literally, except that parts III–VI and some parts of II and VII are the ravings of a fever delirium on the part of the mariner. Which of these interpretations would make the poem most significant and valuable?

143–170. 143–146. **weary:** see note on l. 115–119. **152. I wist. An**

archaic imperfect of the verb wit. The expression is cognate with ywis or iwis (from A.-S. *gewis*). See *Dict.* and *cf. Horatius* (138). **155. water-sprite.** Sprite is the older form of spirit. **162. With . . . baked:** see note on ll. 37–40. **164. Gramercy** (Fr. *grand*, great + *merci*, thanks), an expression of joy and thankfulness. **grin.** What gave the sailors this appearance? *Cf.* with the next two lines.

171–202. 171–176. **The . . . Sun.** Describe this picture. 177–184. **And . . . gossameres.** Point out the uncanny in the picture, and show the effect on the mariner. 178. **Heaven's Mother,** the Virgin Mary. 184. **gossameres,** a very filmy kind of cobweb. Look up the derivation. 188. **a Death.** How account for the fact that it is the woman, more than the Death, that seems to fill the mariner with horror? 190–194. **Her . . . cold.** Describe the woman, and show the impression she produces. 193. **Life-in-Death.** Would Death-in-Life have been a more exact or a more imaginatively suggestive term? 197. **I've won.** In a previous throw of the dice, Death has evidently won the other sailors. In this throw Life-in-Death wins the mariner. How does this correspond with their subsequent adventures? 199–200. **The . . . dark.** So always in the tropics. Notice the fine metaphor in Coleridge's marginal gloss on these lines. 201. **whisper.** Describe the effect of this onomatopœia. On the qualities of sound in verse, see INTRODUCTION, pp. lxix–lxxvi. The poem is a veritable garner of memory images, poetic figures, and rhetorical devices, and will well repay study from this point of view.

203–223. 203. **looked sideways up.** What does this suggest? 204–205. **Fear . . . sip.** Explain the simile, showing the force of 'sip.' 207. **white.** Syntax? 209. **clomb,** archaic for climbed. **eastern bar.** Explain. 210–211. **The . . . tip.** Show why this position of the star is impossible. How do you account for the fact that the mariner took note of all these details at this terrible moment? 215. **cursed.** Why? Was the curse just? 223. **Like . . . bow:** see note on ll. 141–142. Explain fully why the mariner was fated to live while his comrades all died. An interesting discussion of this question may be found in George Macdonald's *David Elginbrod,* chap. v.

PART IV. Designate the shifts of scenes that occur in this part.

224–262. 226–227. **And . . . sand.** These lines were contributed by Wordsworth. Describe the picture. What does l. 227 modify? 232–235. **Alone . . . agony:** see note on l. 115–119. Show that this loneliness was spiritual as well as physical. 236–239. **The . . . I.** Can you explain this mood, where death is beautiful and life terrible? 245. **or ever,** before ever. **gusht.** In what respect does the choice of this word excel? 246. **wicked whisper.** What was this whisper and what did it say? Why could the mariner not pray? Observe that this is the climax of his hardness of heart, his rebellion against Providence, his hatred of God's creatures. 253–262. **The cold . . . not die.** Discuss these stanzas as the climax of the mariner's penance and suffering. 255. **The look:** see l. 215. 262. **could not die:** see note on l. 197.

263–291. Contrast as to pictures and mood these stanzas with those preceding. Read Coleridge's marginal gloss as a help in explaining the change which is coming over the spirit of the mariner. **263–266. The . . . beside.** Indicate the beauties of versification and poetry in this stanza. Observe that the mariner is at last awakened to an interest outside of himself and his own sufferings: *cf. Prisoner of Chillon* (251–258). **267–281. Her beams . . . fire.** Note the images of color in these stanzas, and show how they contribute to the poetic impression. **267. bemocked . . . main.** Explain. **268. spread.** Syntax? **270–271. The . . . red:** *cf.* with ll. 129–130, showing the difference in the effects produced upon the mariner. **287. I blessed them unaware.** This may be taken as the climax of the story. The mariner no longer rebels; his heart has softened. The cruelty which prompted, the disregard of life which permitted, the killing of the albatross, are replaced by spontaneous love of the lowly creatures of the sea. **288–291. The . . . sea:** see note on ll. 141–142, regarding the significance of the release from the albatross. Why is the mariner now able to pray?

PART V. What time elapses in this part? How is the action divided, and what shifts of scene are included?

292–308. 292. **Oh sleep!** Consult INTRODUCTION, p. lxx, on the quality of the sounds in this passage. *Cf.* Coleridge's invocation to sleep with those of Shakespeare in *Second Part of Henry IV*, III, 1; *Macbeth*, II, 2; and *Julius Cæsar*, IV, 3 (last part). 294. **Mary Queen:** *cf.* l. 178. 296. **slid.** Point out the force of this word. 297. **silly.** Some take this to mean blessed or happy (since now filled with water): see derivation of 'silly'; while some define it as foolish or useless (since they had so long been empty). Decide. 305. **could not feel.** Why this lightness?

309–344. 309. **roaring wind.** What was there supernatural about the 'wind'? 317. **wan . . . stars.** Why 'wan'? 325–326. **The lightning . . . wide,** now evidently "sheet lightning," rather than "chain lightning," as in l. 314. 331. **They . . . uprose:** see Wordsworth's remarks at the beginning of notes to this poem. Discuss 'sere,' l. 312; 'fire-flags sheen,' l. 314; 'had,' l. 333; 'lifeless tools,' l. 339.

345–382. 345. **I fear thee.** Why? 349. **troop of spirits.** Comment upon the significance of this spiritual aid. 358–372. **Sometimes . . . tune.** These stanzas, especially the last, may be considered among the most melodious in English poetry. The student should point out words which are especially musical and lines that appear to be inevitably artistic. It is to lines like these that Swinburne refers when he says, "Of Coleridge's best verses I venture to affirm that the world has nothing like them, and can never have." 358. **a-dropping.** Give meaning and syntax. 366. **That makes . . . mute.** Explain. 379. **The spirit slid:** see ll. 131–134. Is there any change in the spirit's attitude toward the mariner, and, if so, why? 382. **the ship stood still.** The ship has now reached the equator, beyond which point the spirit of the south has not the power to go. The gloss to this stanza seems to be inconsistent with the gloss to ll. 103–106. Does this inconsistency extend to

the poem, and, if so, is there any way in which the contradiction can be reconciled?

383–409. 386. **a short uneasy motion.** The Polar spirit, though unable to cross the 'line,' still endeavors to keep his hold upon the ship. The guardian saint (see l. 286 and the gloss to ll. 345–349) seeks to set it free; hence this 'motion.' 394. **I have not to,** *i.e.* am not able to. 395. **living life.** Show what this means, and how the voices of l. 397 are supposed to be 'heard' by the unconscious mariner. 399. **By . . . cross,** a common ballad oath. 404–405. **He . . . bow.** These lines well express the sin of cruelty and ingratitude for which the mariner is suffering. 406. **softer voice.** The 'first voice' seems to be that of Justice, "Sin must be punished." The 'second voice' is that of Mercy, "Sin may be pardoned." With this idea *cf.* Portia's speech in *Merchant of Venice,* IV, 1, 177–195.

PART VI. The forward movement in this part may be considered along the following lines: (1) the ship's progress and the shifting scenes; (2) the change in the apparent physical condition of the mariner; (3) the progress in expiation of his crime; (4) the waning of the supernatural and the return to the natural. Exemplify.

410–429. 414. **Still . . . lord.** Explain the figure and show its fitness as here used. 416. **great bright eye.** What gave the ocean this appearance? 418. **If . . . go.** Supply the infinitive of which this line is the object. 419. **guides.** How? 422. **so fast:** see marginal gloss.

430–451. 433. **The dead men stood together.** This is evidently the last penance to be undergone on board the ship. Show why it was imposed, and compare its effect with that of ll. 255–262. 435. **fitter.** Modifies what? 442. **spell,** which had held his gaze. 444. **little saw.** Why? 446–451. **Like . . . tread.** Analyze the figure in detail. What in the mariner's experience corresponds to 'road,' 'turned round,' 'fiend,' etc.?

452–483. 452. **wind.** Compare, in various respects, with the wind of l. 309. 457. **Like . . . spring,** thus bringing up images of home. *Cf.* 'welcoming' (459). 458. **It . . . fears.** Explain. 463. **On . . . blew.** Significance of this? 465–466. **The . . . kirk:** see ll. 22–24 and note. 467. **countree:** see note on l. 12. 470. **O . . . alway.** What is implied by this prayer? 475. **shadow of the Moon.** What does this mean? 479. **steady weathercock.** Explain, showing force of the adjective. Name some other moonlight scenes of the poem. 482–483. **Full . . . came.** Describe. See marginal gloss.

484–513. 489. **by the holy rood,** the Cross, an oath frequent in ballads: *cf.* l. 399. 494. **They stood as signals.** Observe that here, as in ll. 335–349, the angelic spirits appear in order to *aid* the mariner. 512. **shrieve,** an obsolete form of shrive, to absolve from guilt or sin; here, from the blood-guiltiness of the albatross's death. See note on ll. 141–142.

PART VII. Designate the successive topics in this part.

514–555. 517. **marineres:** see note on l. 12. 525. **those lights:** *cf.* ll. 494–495. 526. **That,** subject of 'made.' 530. **sere:** *cf.* l. 312. 533–534.

Brown . . . along. Describe the picture. **537. That . . . young.** What does the clause modify? **549. The ship went down like lead.** Thus the poet suddenly transports us "from the land of mystery to that of human reality," from the supernatural to the natural world. The mariner has been undergoing punishment for guilt; has been passing through a fearful experience for his spiritual salvation. The ship has been the stage on which these scenes have been enacted, and when it has served its purpose it disappears from human sight. This disappearance not only hides the mystery of the dead, but breaks the only material link that binds the mariner to his dreadful past.

556–581. 558–559. **save . . . sound.** Explain. **560–565. the Pilot . . . crazy go.** The terrifying appearance of the mariner is here in evidence. Why is the Hermit less affected than the rest? "No man liveth to himself alone"—this seems to be the poet's thought. The mariner has done penance, but the consequences of his sin have altered his relation to his fellow-men. **565. now.** When? **581. And . . . free.** Explain.

582–625. 586. **like night.** Comment upon the simile. **588–590. That . . . teach:** *cf.* ll. 2 and 18, and show on what basis the mariner selects his hearers. What does this suggest as to the Wedding-Guest? **591. What loud uproar.** What is the æsthetic value of this reference to the wedding? **595–596. And hark . . . prayer.** What is the significance of these lines? *Cf.* ll. 601–617. **598. Alone . . . sea:** *cf.* ll. 232–235 and note. **603. To walk.** Syntax? **612–617. He . . . all,** the moral of the poem. Coleridge once said he feared he had obtruded it too openly on the reader. Do you agree? **618–625. The Mariner . . . morn.** Describe the mood with which the poem ends. **620–621. Wedding-Guest turned.** Why? **622. forlorn,** an archaic passive participle, meaning bereft. **624. sadder.** What does the word mean here? What lesson has the Wedding-Guest learned?

Is the style of the poem classical or romantic? Does it incline in treatment to the idealistic, realistic, or æsthetic? (See INTRODUCTION, pp. ciii–cxi, for principles of judgment.)

BYRON

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

The Prisoner of Chillon was written in Switzerland, June, 1816, shortly after Byron had left England for the last time. The poet, who, with Shelley, was sailing on Lake Geneva, had been deeply impressed with the castle of Chillon, its romantic history, its picturesque situation on the northern shore of the beautiful lake, its massive walls and gloomy dungeons. He had also heard, in a general way, of Bonnivard, a political prisoner, who had occupied a cell in the castle nearly three hundred years before. He wrote the poem during a two days' detention by storms, at a little village on the shore of the lake.

In a prefatory note, Byron says, "When this poem was composed, I was

not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavored to dignify the subject by an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues." On the whole, we may be glad that he did not know more fully the story of the actual prisoner of Chillon, since in simplicity, vigor of treatment, impressiveness, and hold upon the sympathy of the reader, the poem, just as it is, leaves little to be desired.

I. Indicate the topic of this and of each succeeding division in its turn. **2–3. Nor . . . night.** Observe the dimeter lines. Describe the versification of the poem. What other poems of this book have similar rhyme and metre? (See INTRODUCTION.) **6. vile repose.** Meaning? **7. spoil.** In what sense? **10. bann'd,** shut off or denied. Discriminate between 'bann'd' and 'barr'd.' **14. For,** on account of. **tenets.** See *Dict.* **17. were . . . are.** Note the contrast. **26. this wreck.** Meaning?

II. Indicate topic as before. **27. Gothic mould,** Gothic form of architecture. What are some of its characteristics as compared with Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Roman, Byzantine? **29. massy,** massive. **35. marsh's meteor lamp,** the will o' the wisp. See note on *L'Alleg.* (104). **41. this new day.** When will he be 'done' with it? **42. painful.** Why? **47. lay living.** The poem is notable for its alliterations. Point them out as they occur, showing effect of each, *i.e.* fitness, beauty, or the opposite. What instances so far?

III. Topic? **48. column stone.** What is meant? **49. each alone.** Meaning? **52. But,** except. **57. pure elements of earth,** such as light, sunshine, wholesome air, etc. **63. dreary.** Show how the sound of this word suggests its meaning — a kind of onomatopœia.

IV. **71. ought.** What tense? **72. in his degree.** Meaning? **78. such bird in such a nest.** Kind and fitness of the figure? **80–81. When . . . free.** Meaning? **82. polar day.** What is the point of this comparison? Near the poles the day lasts the whole season. **84. sleepless summer . . . long light.** Note the double alliteration in the same line. *Cf.* l. 10. **85. offspring.** Explain the figure. **86–91. And thus . . . below.** What are the characteristics of this younger brother?

V. Characterize the second brother. **95. had stood,** would have stood. **101. forced it on,** made *my* spirit keep up. **102. Those relics,** the two brothers were all that were left, hence 'relics.' **105. gulf,** an abyss in which he was overwhelmed.

VI. Remember to indicate the topic of each division of the poem. **107. Lake Leman,** from the Latin, *Lacus Lemanus,* as used in Cæsar's *Commentaries,* I, 8. **108. A thousand feet.** Below the castle the lake has been fathomed and proved to be nearly one thousand feet deep. **112. enthralls,** to enslave or hold captive; thus the wave (or lake) surrounds the battlements of the castle and holds it captive. **114. living grave.** Explain. **122. rock, rocked.** These words are of entirely different derivation. Look them up.

VII. **126. nearer.** In what sense? **135. years.** Syntax? **136. pent,**

penned or confined. **150–151. And . . . cave.** Why especially pitiful? **154. foolish thought.** Why foolish? **160. earth.** Syntax? **163. murder's fitting monument.** How is the chain a fitting monument?

VIII. **167. race.** Meaning? **173. natural or inspired.** What distinction between these two words? **175. was wither'd.** Explain why passive voice. **184. horrors . . . woe.** Discriminate between these words. **189. those.** Why plural, when there was but one? **193. departing rainbow's ray.** Show the fitness of the figure. **198. better days.** When? **205–211. I . . . him.** Compare the emotions of the prisoner with those which he felt when the other brother died. **212–213. I.** Why is 'I' italicized. **214. dungeon-dew.** Meaning? **226. ne'er be so.** What is meant? **229. faith.** This evidently means religion, which forbade suicide (a selfish death). But why is it called an 'earthly' hope?

IX. Describe in detail the mental condition of the prisoner as shown here. This is often called the best division of the poem. Why? **233–236. First . . . stone.** Discuss. **237. wist,** knew. **243. vacancy absorbing space.** What does the poet seem to mean? **245–246. no stars . . . crime.** What does each pair of words add in describing his condition? Try to get a definite idea of these lines and, indeed, of each line of the division, as they all demand close thought.

X. Show what the bird did toward bringing the prisoner back to light and life. **257–258. And they . . . misery,** *i.e.* he forgot, for the moment, his sad condition. **262. close slowly round me.** What does this mean? **269. a thousand things.** Discuss. **274. not half so desolate,** else it could not have sung so sweetly. **277. dungeon's brink,** the verge, or window ledge of the dungeon. **283. in winged guise,** in the form of a bird. **293–299. Lone . . . gay.** What do you call these figures? Show their force and fitness, and the extreme beauty of the details of the second one. **297. a frown.** Explain the figure.

XI, XII. Topic of each, as always? **303. inured.** Explain. **308. athwart.** Meaning? **315. profaned,** *i.e.* by stepping on their graves. **319. therefrom,** from or by aid of the footing. **323. wider prison.** Explain and note the pathos of the idea.

XIII. **334. thousand years,** a large definite number for an indefinite — a species of synecdoche. *Cf.* l. 269, and see INTRODUCTION, p. xlvi, on poetic figures. **339. town,** a Swiss village across the lake. **341. a little isle.** Byron has elsewhere spoken of this island, with its 'three tall trees' — the only island he saw in his voyage around the lake. In what sense did it 'smile' at the prisoner? **356. new tears came in my eye.** Describe this mood. **364. opprest,** by what?

XIV. Give topic. **369. mote,** the speck (of misery) in his eye that prevented his looking at things around him. **370. At last . . . free.** Explain his lack of interest. **374. love despair.** Describe such a condition of mind. **382. sullen trade.** Explain. **384. feel less than they.** Meaning? **389. friends.** Why? Syntax of the word? **390. communion,** association. **391. even I.** Why does he use the word 'even'?

SONNET ON CHILLON

This sonnet was prefixed by Byron to his *Prisoner of Chillon*, although it was not written until afterward, when the poet had become better acquainted with the story of Bonnivard. François de Bonnivard (1496–1570), undoubtedly the most illustrious of all those who have occupied the dungeons of Chillon, had incurred the displeasure of the Duke of Savoy by taking the side of the people of Geneva against the aggressions of that ruler. About 1520 the patriot was forced into exile, and ten years later captured and imprisoned in Chillon, where he remained six years. Liberated in 1536, he was welcomed with distinguished honors into the city for whose sake he had suffered. The sonnet is a noble expression of Byron's passion for liberty.

STANZAS FROM CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE

Although of Childe Harold the third Canto is probably the best on the whole, it undoubtedly contains no single group of stanzas which deserves to rank so high as these extracts from Canto IV. They were written, presumably at Venice, in 1817. The desolation of ruined Rome and the lessons that it taught appear to have powerfully impressed Byron; so much so, that perhaps nowhere in his poems is he more sincerely and nobly eloquent than here.

These stanzas are inserted merely to serve as an illustration, and to give a slight taste, of the poet's greatest production. Accordingly we shall leave to the student the task, or privilege, of working out for himself the meaning of the lines. Attention may well be called, however, to the fine artistic sense which prompted Byron to make use of the Spenserian stanza for his poem. Perhaps nowhere else can the stanza be found written with equal strength and dignity.

SHELLEY

ODE TO THE WEST WIND

Of his *Ode to the West Wind*, written in 1819, Shelley has left the following account: "This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapors which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset, with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions." Unlike most lyrics the lines of this poem are in unbroken iambic pentameter. (For the stanzaic structure, which is interesting and unique, see INTRODUCTION, p. lxxx.)

I. A careful study of the poetic figures should be made throughout the poem. **7. winged.** Explain. **9. azure sister.** Note that the poet is addressing the tempestuous west wind of autumn. In the spring there will come a gentler sister breeze, this time from the azure sky instead of the storm cloud. **9–10. blow Her clarion.** Explain. **11. Driving . . . air** What does the poet mean? **14. preserver:** see ll. 6–7.

II. 15–23. **Thou . . . storm.** Which of these two similes is the more apt the more suggestive, the more poetical? 18. **Angels,** in the radical sense of messengers. See derivation. 19. **thine airy surge.** Explain. 21. **Mænad,** a frenzied worshipper of Bacchus. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 76. 23. **locks.** Syntax? 28. **Black rain . . . will burst:** see Shelley's account above.

III. 31. **coil,** an obsolete word of Celtic origin, meaning noise, here pleasant murmuring. 32. **pumice isle,** an island formed of light volcanic lava, or pumice stone. **Baiae's bay,** a part of the bay of Naples. 33–34. **And saw . . . intenser day.** There was formerly a large and important city at Baiae, now mostly submerged. The palaces of this city can be seen in the clear waters of the bay — waters so clear that the azure of the bay is brighter than that of the sky; hence 'intenser day.' But why 'quivering'? 40. **sapless foliage.** Explain. 42. **oh, hear.** Observe that each of the three stanzas thus far has ended with these words.

IV. 43–45. **dead leaf, swift cloud, wave,** in reference to the leaves (Stanza I), clouds (Stanza II), and waves (Stanza III). 48. **as in my boyhood.** A reference to the restless wanderings of Shelley's earlier life. 54. **I fall . . . I bleed:** see next two lines.

V. 60. **both.** From me and the forest, if thou wilt make us both thy lyre. What does this mean? 62. **me.** Can the case of the pronoun be justified? 63. **my dead thoughts.** In spite of Shelley's passion for reforming the world and breathing into it a spirit of larger liberty, he was at that time little known or read. 64. **quicken a new birth:** see ll. 4–12. 69. **prophecy,** of a freedom for the earth, still slumbering in political and social servitude.

TO A SKYLARK

This poem was written near Leghorn, in Italy, in 1820. It is perhaps the most beautiful of Shelley's lyrics, and most typical of the qualities which especially distinguish him. It would be hard to imagine the spirit which animates the song of a bird translated more exquisitely into words. Concerning this lyric Mrs. Shelley has written: "It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering near the lanes whose myrtle hedges were the bowers of the fireflies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems."

1–30. The clear music of the lark as heard by the poet. 1. **Spirit.** In addressing the bird he appeals to the spirit of music which it embodies. 6–10. **Higher . . . singest.** This stanza well illustrates the effect of the peculiar metre. The first four lines are quick trochaic trimeters, suggestive of the swift upward darting of the bird. The fifth line is iambic hexameter, slow and apparently correspondent to the long and graceful sweep of soaring movement. What is the rhyme system of the poem? 8. **Like a cloud of fire.** Discuss the figure. 16–20. **The pale . . . delight.** Explain the comparison of 'lark' to 'star.' 22. **silver sphere.** Explain. 26–30. **All . . . overflowed.** Note the comparison between the moonbeams and the

song of the lark. In this poem, as in the preceding ode, every figure will repay careful study.

31–60. A description of the bird by a series of similitudes. **36–40. Like . . . not.** Consider how the lark, like the poet, creates the taste which is to enjoy its song? **55. heavy-winged thieves.** The wings of the wind are heavy from the drowsy perfume of the rose.

61–75. Sources and nature of the song. **61. Sprite,** an early form of the word spirit. **66. Hymeneal,** from Hymen, god of marriage. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 70.

76–105. Details of the lark's superiority to the poet. **81–95. Waking . . . near.** Show the connection and trace the thought of these three stanzas. **90. Our . . . thought.** A fine example of the balanced line, inevitable in thought and expression, a touchstone. **96–99. Better . . . found.** Shelley himself excelled in these two particulars, — the understanding of metrical effects, and the knowledge and appreciation of poetry ('treasures of books')

THE CLOUD

This lyric also appeared in 1820, though it must have been composed two or three years before, if, as Mrs. Shelley suggests, it was written in England. In speaking of the ode *To a Skylark* and *The Cloud*, she says that in the opinion of many critics they "bear a purer poetical stamp than any of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted, — listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy, or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames." The cloud itself is supposed to sing.

The metre and rhyme of this poem are characterized by a lightness and airiness of effect especially well suited to the subject. The even-numbered lines are nearly all trimeter, and are rhymed in pairs. The odd-numbered lines are tetrameter, and have only internal rhyme. Though the number of lines in the stanza differs, the stanza is always regularly formed according to the principle shown above. The lightness of movement in the verse is due to the short lines, to the internal rhyme, to the large number of anapestic substitutions, and to the artistic sequences of vowel and consonant sounds. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. liii, lxvi, lxix–lxxiv, lxxvii.)

1–12. 7. **mother's breast.** Who is this mother that dances about the sun? Notice each figure of speech in the stanza.

13–30. Discuss the figures. **18. Lightning.** How is Lightning the pilot of the cloud? **28. Spirit . . . remains,** object of 'dream.' **30. Whilst . . . rains.** Explain this line.

31–44. Discuss figures. **31. sanguine,** blood-red, the radical meaning of the word. Derivation? **33. sailing rack,** thin, broken clouds, sailing or floating through the air. **35–38. As . . . wings.** Show the points of likeness in this comparison. **41. crimson pall.** Describe the picture.

45–58. 53. **whirl and flee.** What gives the stars this appearance? **55.**

wind-built. Explain the adjective. **56–58. Till . . . these.** Describe how the waters become like strips of the sky.

59–72. 59–60. **I bind — pearl.** Explain 'burning zone' and 'girdle of pearl.' 61–62. **The . . . unfurl.** Discuss these lines. 66. **be,** here an indicative. 69. **powers . . . chair.** Meaning? 71. **The . . . wove.** Comment upon the process.

73–84. Discuss the figures. 73; 74. **daughter; nursling.** How so? **81. cenotaph.** Look up meaning and apply it to this picture. **82. caverns of rain.** What is meant?

TO NIGHT

This lyric was written in 1821. Shelley here gives extraordinary evidence of his wizardry in the technique of verse. The metrical effects, the combinations of vowel sounds, the swing of the verse, and its peculiar cadences — all contribute to make the stanzas well-nigh perfect.

1–7. **Swiftly . . . flight.** What is the metrical and stanzaic system of the poem? 1. **western wave.** In what direction is Night represented as moving, and why? 13. **opiate wand,** thus producing sleep. 20. **unloved guest.** Why? unloved by whom? 22. **brother Death.** In what sense is Death the brother of Night? 24. **filmy-eyed.** Consider the epithet. Discuss the use of personification in the poem.

KEATS

THE EVE OF ST. AGNES

St. Agnes was a Roman maiden who suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Diocletian about 300 A.D. The tradition runs that not long after her death she appeared to her parents in a vision in the midst of angels and accompanied by a white lamb. The lamb was henceforward considered sacred to her, and the custom accordingly arose that on St. Agnes's Day (January 21) the nuns of the church should bring two white lambs as an offering to her altar. Various superstitions became connected with her name, among others the belief that maidens who carefully observed certain ceremonies might, on St. Agnes's eve (January 20), obtain a sight of their future husbands. On this tradition Keats's poem is founded. As a narrative it is not without defects, but as a poem of sensuous impressions it has few equals. Sight, hearing, taste, smell, feeling, are brought under tribute and made to respond to the keen yet delicate sensibilities of the poet. Few poets have succeeded in creating an atmosphere so dreamy, so enchanted, so full of beauty, so removed from the common world of our everyday experiences. In many respects *The Eve of St. Agnes* takes us back to the fairyland of Spenser. On the metrical structure of its stanzas, see INTRODUCTION, p. lxxxiii, and notes to stanzas from *Faerie Queene*. The poem was first printed in the volume of 1820, though it had been written the early part of the preceding year.

I–III. Rehearse the various ways by which the cold is suggested in these lines. **2. for,** in spite of. **5. Beadsman,** a retainer of the house whose business it was to utter prayers for his benefactors. The original but now obsolete meaning of bead was a prayer. **told**: see note to *L'Alleg.* (67). **6–9. while . . . picture.** In what particulars is this simile thoroughly "in keeping"? **14–15. dead . . . rails.** The images of the dead ancestors of the household are carved in an attitude of prayer. Their oratories, or prayer rooms, are the little railed-off spaces on each side of the chapel aisle. Their enforced imprisonment, under conditions so unpleasant, suggests 'purgatorial.' **21. Flatter'd.** Leigh Hunt, in his *Imagination and Fancy*, devotes a page and a half to rather over-enthusiastic praise of the aptness of this verb. What are some of its points of excellence? **22. But no.** To what thought in the beadsman's mind is this an answer?

IV–VIII. What means are used by the poet to give the effect of space and magnificence in Stanzas IV and V? Enumerate the details by which emphasis is given to the introduction of the principal character, Madeline. **31. snarling.** Aptness of word? **34–36. The carved . . . breasts.** Describe the picture, especially noting 'eager-eyed.' **37. argent,** bright or shining, as silver. Why this color rather than golden? **39–41. Numerous . . . romance.** Show aptness in the comparison. **56. The music . . . pain**: see INTRODUCTION, p. xliii, on this figure, and note especially the word 'yearning.' **58. train,** of the ladies' skirts. **60. tiptoe,** an adjective meaning eager yet mincing. **62. she saw not.** How is the preoccupation of Madeline evidenced in Stanzas VII and VIII? **70. Hoodwink'd.** Meaning and syntax? **all amort,** the Anglicized form of the French *à la mort*, as if dead. **71. lambs unshorn.** The lambs offered at the altar of St. Agnes. They were then shorn and the wool spun by the nuns. See introduction to notes.

IX–XII. **74. across the moors.** In what country and at what time may we imagine these events to have occurred? **76. portal** (Lat. *porta*), a gate. **78. all saints.** What is gained artistically by placing these scenes in a Catholic environment? Give illustrations. **84. Love's fev'rous citadel.** Discuss the metaphor. **86. Hyena.** Show force of this word here. **90. beldame,** an old woman. Look up derivation and history of word. **100; 103. dwarfish Hildebrand; old Lord Maurice.** Observe the vividness with which the poet "hits off" these characters. **105. Gossip.** Note the history of this word: (1) a sponsor in baptism (A.-S. *god* + *sib*, a God alliance), hence a godmother; (2) a familiar or customary acquaintance; (3) an idle tattler; (4) the tattle of a gossip. In what sense is the word used here?

XIII–XIX. **111. well-a-day,** a corruption of the interjection wel-a-way; (A.-S. *wa-la-wa*), alas. **112. a little moonlight room.** "The poet does not make his 'little moonlight room' comfortable, observe. All is still wintry. There is to be no comfort in the poem but what is given by love. All else may be left to the cold walls." (Leigh Hunt.) **115. by the holy loom**: see note on l. 71. **127. Feebly she laugheth.** Why does she laugh? Describe the picture in detail. Discuss the figure which follows. **129. urchin.**

Look up derivation and trace history of word. **133. brook.** This word is used inaccurately here. What does the poet evidently intend to say? **156. passing bell,** a tolling of a bell to signify that a soul has passed or is passing from the body (formerly to invoke prayers for the dying). **171. Since . . . debt.** Forman, the editor of Keats, explains this line by interpreting Merlin's monstrous debt as "his monstrous existence, which he owed to a demon," and repaid when he died or disappeared through means of a charm which he had revealed to Vivien, and which she used on him. These are legendary characters of the time of King Arthur. The night on which the magician was thus spellbound by his wily sweetheart was attended by a fearful storm. Does 'such a night,' etc. (170), refer to this storm or to the spirit of enchantment in the air?

XX–XXVI. What are the characteristic qualities of the descriptions in Stanzas XXIV and XXV? Note what senses are appealed to. **173. cates,** luxurious foods or delicacies. Look up derivation, and *cf.* cater and caterer; also 'catering' (177). **174. tambour frame.** What is this? **175. lute.** Why introduced? See ll. 289–293. **193. mission'd,** in its radical sense of sent (Lat. *missum*). **unaware,** unexpectedly. **198. fray'd,** terrified. The situation in this stanza is interesting; the trembling Angela startled by the trembling Madeline, etc. In this way fill out the picture. **200. Its . . . died.** What kind of figure? "The smoke of the wax taper seems almost as ethereal and fair as the moonlight, and both suit each other and the heroine." (Leigh Hunt.) **203. No utter'd syllable.** Why? **207. heart-stifled.** How does this apply to Madeline? **208–216. A casement . . . kings.** Leigh Hunt speaks of this stanza as "a burst of richness, noiseless, colored, suddenly enriching the moonlight, as if a door of heaven were opened." Note here as in Stanzas IV and XXV–XXXI the vividness of the derived or memory images and see INTRODUCTION, p. xlii. Try to gain a definite picture of this 'triple-arched' window. Where was the carving? Of what size and shape were the panes? What were the 'emblazonings' and the 'twilight saints'? Where was the 'shielded scutcheon,' and in what sense did it 'blush' with blood of queens and kings? **218. gules,** used poetically for a red color. **218–222. gules, Rose-bloom, soft amethyst; glory.** On this passage Sidney Colvin remarks: "Observation, I believe, shows that moonlight has not the power to transmit the hues of painted glass, as Keats in this celebrated passage represents it. Let us be grateful for the error, if error it is, which has led him to heighten by these saintly splendors of color the sentiment of a scene wherein a voluptuous glow is so exquisitely attempered with chivalrous chastity and awe." **221. Amethyst.** Look up the derivation of the word, and the meaning as applied to heraldry. **228. warmed jewels.** Here we have a good instance of the poet's perfection of taste. Madeline is to be the central figure. Accordingly, Keats resists the temptation to enlarge upon the brilliancy of the gems, but contents himself with an epithet "breathing the very life of the wearer." **234. dares not look behind:** see l. 53.

XXVII–XXXIII. **237. poppied warmth.** Explain the epithet and figure.

241. Clasp'd . . . pray. A 'missal' is a mass-book or prayer-book. **swart Paynims** are dark or swarthy pagans. Is the missal 'clasped' because it is never used in pagan lands, or to shield its contents? **242. Blinded.** What does this figure mean? **244. so.** Force of this adverb? **250. Noiseless . . . wilderness.** Discuss the aptness of the comparison. **251. hush'd carpet.** What kind of figure? This is certainly an anachronism. Floors in mediæval times were strewn with rushes. *Cf. Sir Launfal* (103). For 'carpet' used in its older and proper sense, see l. 285. **253. faded moon.** Discuss the epithet. Enumerate the elements of color and of sound in this stanza. **257. Morphean amulet,** charm to insure sleep, lest the music awaken Madeline. **260. Affray,** same as *fray* (198). **262. azure-lidded sleep.** Discuss the epithet. **264–275. While . . . light.** These lines were evidently introduced because Keats could not resist this chance of appeal to the sense of taste, thus adding to the richness and Oriental coloring of his picture. For the apt sequence of consonants, see INTRODUCTION, p. lxxii. Does this Feast of St. Agnes add to the poem? **266. soother,** more sweet or delightful. **267. tinct.** (*Cf.* tint.) These syrups were evidently given a richer appearance by being stained with cinnamon. **268. argosy.** Derivation? *Cf. Merchant of Venice*, I, 1, 9. **269. Fez,** a province in northwestern Africa. **270. silken Samarcand.** A city in Russian Turkestan, Central Asia. Why 'silken'? **cedar'd Lebanon.** A province of Turkey in Syria, southwestern Asia. Why 'cedar'd'? **271. delicates.** Same as 'cates' (173). **277. eremite,** an older and more correct form of the word hermit. **279. soul doth ache:** *cf.* 'half-anguished,' l. 255. **285. carpet,** table-cover — the original meaning of carpet. As here used the word is not an anachronism. **288. woofed,** woven. **289. hollow,** resounding. **291. ancient ditty:** see note on *La Belle Dame*, etc. This French poem was written early in the fifteenth century, by Alain Chartier. **292. Provence,** an old province in southeastern France. **296. affrayed:** see l. 260, and *cf.* the modern form, afraid.

XXXIV–XXXIX. Observe in this passage how cleverly the poet manages the difficult situation of the awakening of Madeline. **317. voluptuous,** in its radical sense of causing delight, caressingly pleasing to the ear. **322–324. meantime . . . window-panes.** Why does the poet make the weather change from chill moonlight to gusty storm? **325. flaw,** a sudden burst or gust of wind of short duration. Purpose of the descriptive lines 325 and 327? **336. Thy . . . dyed.** What does this line mean? Is it hopelessly extravagant, as some editors hold, or can you justify it? **344. haggard,** wild or untamed. **boon.** Why? **349. Rhenish,** Rhine wine. *Cf. Merchant of Venice* I, 2. **mead,** a fermented drink made of water and honey with malt, yeast, etc.

XL–XLII. **353. sleeping dragons.** What is meant? **360. carpets:** see note on l. 251. **361. They glide.** Would it have been better to represent further perils in leaving the house? Discuss. **365. wakeful bloodhound.** Why introduced? **370. ay, ages long ago.** Observe the art by which the

poet throws a veil of mystery around his poem by assigning it to the remote past, and by removing the only other characters that have entered into the story, — "the figures of the beadsman and the nurse, who live just long enough to share in the wonders of the night and to die quietly of old age when their parts are over"; as, indeed, was foretold in ll. 22–23 and 155–156. The castle is left to the drunken baron and his warrior-guests, while the lovers are 'fled away into the storm.'

ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

The note of sadness, distinct in this poem, is partly explained when we consider the date of its production, and the events preceding it. Consumption was hereditary in the family of Keats, and during the latter months of 1818 the poet had been witness to the struggles of his brother against that disease. The brother died in December, and doubtless about this time Keats began to foresee the same fate for himself, although the malady did not define itself until a year later. This ode, written in the early part of 1819, when the writer's sorrow was at its height, furnishes an interesting companion picture to Shelley's *Skylark*. For another contrast between lark and nightingale, see *L'Alleg.* (41–44) and *Il Pens.* (56–58).

I. The stanzas of the poem are uniform. What is their metre and rhyme system? **4. Lethe.** For this river of forgetfulness, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 81. **6. too happy.** The poet's heartache comes from the sensitive and exquisite sympathy he feels with the bird; his sympathetic and sensuous pleasure has in its intensity become pain. **7–10. That . . . ease.** Meaning of 'that' and syntax of the clause? The correct answer will make clear the meaning. **7. Dryad.** Why does he call the bird a Dryad? See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 77.

II–IV, l. 34. **13. Flora**, the goddess of flowers. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 73, 89. **14. Provençal**, a district in southern France noted for its wines and for the merry out-of-door life of its people, its open-air or 'sunburnt' mirth. See *Eve of St. Agnes* (292). **16. Hippocrene**, a fountain of the Muses on Mt. Helicon. See *Cl. M.*, p. 470. Explain the metonymy. **23–24. The weariness . . . groan.** This view of the world is one often expressed by poets. *Cf.* Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey* (52–53): —

> "the fretful stir
> Unprofitable, and the fever of the world."

26. youth, evidently thinking of his brother. **31–34. Away . . . retards.** He here determines to forget the world, and to find the fairyland of the nightingale through the power of 'Poesy' rather than of wine. **32. Bacchus**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 76. **pards.** For these animals, sacred to Bacchus, see note on *Comus* (444).

IV, l. 35–V. A description of the land of Poesy, home of the nightingale. **35. Already with thee.** He suddenly imagines himself in that land. **39–40. Save . . . ways**, as the swaying branches of the trees admit the fitful light. **43. embalmed darkness**, darkness permeated by the balmy odor of the

season's fragrance. What kind of figure? Throughout these lines note the appeal to the sense of smell. **50. The . . . eves.** Observe the onomatopœia.

VI–VIII. **51. Darkling,** in the dark. **I listen,** coördinate with 'it seems rich.' **for,** inasmuch as (a subordinate conjunction). Its clause modifies 'seems rich.' **62. No . . . down.** A fine example of a line inevitable in thought and grace. It recalls somewhat the idea of ll. 23–24. The stanza is beyond praise — replete with poetic touchstones. **65. found a path.** Explain this beautiful metaphor. **67. alien corn,** the wheat and barley which Ruth gleaned in the land of Boaz. See the book of *Ruth* ii. 3, 23. **68–70. The same . . . forlorn.** In these lines the poet has penetrated to the heart of his fairyland. The chance word 'forlorn' awakens him into the real world. The last lines are unsurpassable in suggestion and charm. **75–80. Adieu . . . sleep.** In some respects these lines may be compared with the last stanza of *The Lady of the Lake.* **75. fades.** Justify the figure. Observe the quiet close, and see note on *Lyc.* (186–193).

ODE ON A GRECIAN URN

The Grecian Urn and *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* have been called "the twin peaks" of Keats's verse. The subject of the ode was especially attractive to Keats, for no one had a deeper sympathy with the artistic spirit of Hellas than he. "I have loved," he says, "the principle of beauty in all things"; and he recognized in the Greeks the most perfect portrayers of the beautiful. He was a devoted student of their plastic art through the specimens preserved in the British Museum. And from a comparison of these sculptures with engravings of others, he doubtless derived the conception of his *Grecian Urn;* for it has not been discovered that any single work of art stood as model. This, like most of Keats's other odes, was written in 1819. The metrical structure of its stanzas may profitably be compared with that of the *Ode to a Nightingale.*

1–10. 1–3. bride of quietness, foster-child of silence and slow time, Sylvan historian. Comment upon the figures and show how each applies to the *Grecian Urn.* **5–10. What . . . ecstasy.** Note the subtle indirectness of the description. **5. leaf-fring'd legend haunts.** Notice the imagery of these words. **7. Tempe,** a vale in Thessaly.

11–30. These lines furnish an admirable contrast between the shortness and decay of life and the abiding beauty of art. The creator of the urn has arrested his characters at a single significant moment of their lives. They accordingly live for us in permanent beauty and imaginative appeal. **11–12. those unheard Are sweeter.** Explain. See INTRODUCTION, pp. lxix–lxxvi, on tone-color and melody in verse, and illustrate from this stanza. **13. sensual,** here means physical or bodily. **18. winning near,** approaching. **25. more happy love,** happier even than the boughs or the melodist. Its anticipation is far more to be desired than the cloying realities of actual life (29–30). **28. passion.** Object of 'above.'

31–40. 31. **sacrifice.** The central figures of the urn appear to be engaged in a sacrificial procession. 38. **little town,** whose inhabitants have been caught by the hand of the artist and placed upon this urn.

41–50. 44–45. **tease . . . eternity.** The urn like eternity exhausts our powers of thought. 46–50. **When . . . know.** Again the permanence of art is emphasized — art that shall teach to future generations what was to Keats a cardinal doctrine, that Beauty is only another name for Truth, and that of all things she alone is imperishable. What lines of this ode are worthy to be accepted as poetic touchstones, and why? (See INTRODUCTION, p. cvi.)

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

La Belle Dame Sans Merci was written probably during the early part of 1819. The title, which is taken from an old French poem, seems early to have caught Keats's fancy, as is indicated by the use made of it in the *Eve of St. Agnes*, l. 292. Keats's mystical ballad, however, is entirely his own invention, and is justly considered to be one of our best poetic revivals of mediæval romanticism. Sidney Colvin, in his *Life of Keats*, says, "The union of infinite tenderness with a weird intensity, the conciseness and purity of the poetic form, the wild yet simple magic of the cadences, the perfect, inevitable union of sound and sense, make of *La Belle Dame Sans Merci* the masterpiece not only among the shorter poems of Keats, but even (if any single masterpiece must be chosen) among them all." As regards the poetic symbolism of the verses, Colvin continues: "Keats's ballad can hardly be said to tell a story; but rather sets before us, with imagery drawn from the mediæval world of enchantment and knight-errantry, a type of the wasting power of love, when either adverse fate or deluded choice makes of love not a blessing but a bane. Every reader must feel how truly the imagery expresses the passion: how powerfully, through these fascinating old-world symbols, the universal heart of man is made to speak."

SONNETS

Though as a writer of sonnets Keats cannot compare with Milton in quality, or with Wordsworth in either quantity or quality, he probably ought to be ranked above most other writers of this form of verse, such as Mrs. Browning, Arnold, or Rossetti. His sonnets are mostly of the strict Italian type, described in the INTRODUCTION, p. lxxxvi.

On first looking into Chapman's Homer

As we have noted, Keats, though handicapped by lack of knowledge of the Greek language, had an intellectual and emotional sympathy with the spirit of Greek art and literature. On coming to London the young poet was accustomed to spend his evenings reading with his friend Cowden Clarke. One of the books they thus attacked was a borrowed copy of Chapman's Homer, which they read far into the night. On coming down to breakfast

next morning, Clarke found awaiting him this sonnet, which Keats had written since leaving him a few hours before. This was sometime during the summer of 1815, when Keats was only twenty years of age, and had as yet done nothing to show his power as a poet. Yet the sonnet is not only his best, but is one of the best of all English sonnets.

What are the 'realms of gold,' the western 'states,' 'kingdoms,' and 'islands' of ll. 1–4? Why 'fealty to Apollo'? Why 'deep-brow'd' (6)? 'Chapman' (8), poet and dramatist, was a contemporary of Shakespeare. The tribute which Keats pays him in this sonnet is well deserved, for his translations rank among the best in the English language. 'Cortez' (11). It was Balboa and not Cortez who discovered the Pacific; but as Mr. Colvin says, "What does it matter?" 'Darien' (14) refers to the Isthmus of Panama.

On the Grasshopper and Cricket

This sonnet was written December 30, 1816. Keats, Leigh Hunt, and Cowden Clarke were together one evening, when Hunt proposed that each of them should then and there write a sonnet upon some subject to be agreed upon. The topic chosen for their experiment was that of the grasshopper and the cricket. No better illustration can be found of the manner in which the true artist may invest the commonest things in nature with interest and poetic charm. Keats has here shown us that the beauty of a poem need not depend upon aloofness or splendor of subject. This was a lesson that Wordsworth constantly aimed to teach.

MACAULAY

HORATIUS

Horatius is the first of Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, a collection of four stirring ballads, published in 1842. In a preface to the *Lays* the poet states his grounds for believing that the early Romans once possessed a considerable volume of ballad-poetry, which, after being transformed into history, had been allowed to perish. As to *Horatius*, he says: "There can be little doubt that among those parts of early Roman history which had a poetic origin was the legend of Horatius Cocles. . . . The following ballad is supposed to have been made about a hundred and twenty years after the war which it celebrates, and just before the taking of Rome by the Gauls. The imaginary Roman author seems to have been an honest citizen, proud of the military glory of his country, sick of the disputes of factions, and much given to pining after good old times which had really never existed."

As is shown by the heading of the poem, Macaulay supposes his "honest citizen" to have made this ballad about three hundred and sixty years after the founding of Rome, or 393 B.C. It need not detract from our enjoyment of the story to learn that there is little or no historic foundation for the legend of Horatius. As a matter of fact, according to the Roman historian, Tacitus,

Porsena's expedition was entirely successful, and Rome passed for a time under the Etruscan yoke. The tale of Horatius and his two companions was no doubt fabricated to increase the patriotic ardor of the Romans, and to help them forget the chagrin of defeat. But the historical accuracy of the story is a matter of only secondary importance. As Professor Morley says in his introduction to the *Lays*, "The songs of the people were free to suppress a great defeat and put in its place a myth of a heroic deed: some small fact serving as seed that shall grow and blossom out into a noble tale."

I–II. Indicate the topic which these stanzas develop. 1. **Lars**, a title of honor given by Romans to the Etruscan kings. **Porsena**, king of Clusium, who, when summoned to the aid of Tarquinius Superbus, completely conquered Rome. See introduction to these notes. **Clusium**, the most important of the twelve cities of the Etruscan confederation, situated in the fertile valley of the river Clanis, a tributary of the Tiber. 2. **Nine Gods**, the nine great Etruscan gods, hurlers of the thunderbolt. 3. **house of Tarquin.** The family of Tarquinius Superbus, the seventh and last of the legendary kings of Rome, had been expelled from the city, in consequence of a brutal assault made upon Lucretia, a Roman matron, by Sextus, the second son of Tarquin. Porsena evidently considered this expulsion of the Tarquins a 'wrong' (l. 4), and led in this, the third attempt to restore them to power. 10. **East . . . north** : see note on l. 23 below. 11. **ride.** Explain change of tense. What is the verse-form of this poem? How does it differ from that of *The Ancient Mariner?* (See notes on *The Ancient Mariner* and INTRODUCTION, pp. lv, xcii.)

III–V. Give topics as before. 23. **beech and pine** : *cf.* among many other instances ll. 8, 12, and 20–22. This is one of the most marked characteristics of Macaulay's style, *i.e.* the preference for the *definite* and *concrete* instead of the *general* and *abstract.* 25. **purple Apennine.** Why 'purple'? 26. **Volaterræ**, one of the twelve cities of the Etruscan league, 'lordly' because on the summit of a high and precipitous hill. 30. **Populonia**, the chief seacoast town of Etruria, situated on a high peninsula, near the island of 'Ilva' (Elba), and within sight of the large island of Sardinia. 34. **Pisæ**, one of the twelve Etruscan cities situated on the bank of the river Arnus (Arno) a few miles from its mouth, and on a good harbor, hence ll. 34–37. 36. **Massilia.** Marseilles, in France. **triremes.** Meaning and derivation? 37. **fair-haired slaves**, evidently on their way from northern Gaul to the slave marts of Italy. 38. **Clanis**: see note on l. 1. 40. **Cortona.** Still another of the twelve cities of the league, on a lofty hill about nine miles north of Lake Trasimene.

VI–VIII. Give topics. 42–49. **Tall . . . mere.** Why this detail regarding the height of the oaks, the fatness of the stags, etc.? Show relation of this stanza to the next. 43. **Auser.** A small river formerly tributary of the Arno. See note l. 34. Its channel has become diverted. The present name of the river is the Serchio. Why 'dark'? 45. **Ciminian**, a wooded mountain range extending from the Tiber southwest to the sea. 46. **Clitum-**

nus, a small tributary of the Tiber draining a valley of rich pasture lands. **49. Volsinian mere.** The modern Lago di Bolsena, a lake of southern Etruria. Mere (lake) and marsh (swampy land such as frequently borders lakes) are derived from Lat. *mare* (sea). **52. green path.** Why 'green'? **58. Arretium,** the modern Arezzo, birthplace of Petrarch. Arretium, one of the most powerful of the twelve cities of the league, was situated in the upper valley of the Arno, at the foot of the Apennines. **60. Umbro,** modern Ombrone, a large river of Etruria between the Arno and the Tiber. **62. Luna,** the most northerly town of Etruria, famous for its wines. **59–64. old men, young boys, girls.** Explain why. Note here and elsewhere the preponderance of derived, or remembered, images, and see INTRODUCTION, p. xlii.

IX–X. Give topic. **66. prophets.** Etruscan augurs whose duty it was to interpret the will of the gods. **71. turned the verses o'er,** *i.e.* pondered over their ancient sacred books of prophecy. **72. Traced . . . right.** The Etruscans, like some of the peoples of western Asia, wrote from the right to the left. **linen,** on which early books were sometimes written. **79. dome,** palace (from Lat. *domus*, house). **80. Nurscia,** an Etruscan goddess of Fortune. **81. golden shields,** the twelve sacred shields of Rome, dating from the time of Numa, the second legendary king.

XI–XII. Give topic. **83. tale,** number. See note on *L'Alleg.* (67). **86. Sutrium,** a small town in southern Etruria, and about thirty miles north of Rome. **96. Tusculan Mamilius,** Octavius Mamilius (son-in-law of Tarquinius), a leader of Tusculum, a city fifteen miles southeast of Rome. Owing to his power and to his connection with the Tarquins, he was made leader of the Latin allies of Porsena.

XIII–XV. Give topic. **98. yellow,** an adjective commonly used in describing the Tiber. This color is probably due to the red volcanic earth which forms the river bed. **100. champaign.** Look up meaning and derivation, comparing with camp, campus, campaign, and champagne. **115. skins of wine,** bags of goatskin in which wine was carried. **116. endless.** Describe scene. **117. kine,** an old plural of cow. **121. roaring gate.** Why 'roaring'? Name all the subjects of 'choked.'

XVI–XIX. Give topics. **122. rock Tarpeian,** a steep rock, eighty feet high, overlooking the Roman Forum. See Tarpeia in *Cl. D.*, or among Names of Fiction in *Dict.* **124. blazing villages.** Explain. **126. Fathers,** the Senators, who were generally old men. See derivation of Senate. **129. tidings** : see next stanza. **133. Crustumerium,** an ancient town of Latium. **134. Ostia.** The seaport of Rome, fifteen miles distant at the mouth of the Tiber. **134; 136. Verbenna; Astur.** Names of Etruscan chiefs, invented by Macaulay. **136. Janiculum,** a hill across the Tiber, just outside Rome. **138. I wis,** surely. An adverb sometimes written *ywis*. *Cf.* the German word *gewiss*. **140. But,** but that; that did not. **142. Consul,** one of the two chief magistrates who ruled Rome after the expulsion of the kings. **144. gowns,** togas, which would hinder rapid walking. **145. them.** In form a personal pronoun, here used as a reflexive. **150. roundly,** plainly

and to the point. **151. bridge,** a very old wooden bridge across the Tiber from Rome to Janiculum.

XX–XXV. Give topic. **163. red whirlwind.** Note that the forces are coming so near that the color of the dust can be seen, and coming so fast that the 'storm' is now a 'whirlwind.' **165. rolling cloud.** Explain. **162–173. And . . . spears.** Show how rhyme and metre of this long stanza help to picture a hurried approach. **177. twelve fair cities,** of the Etruscan confederation. **178. Clusium** : see note on l. 1. **180–181. Umbrian, Gaul,** both often invaded by the Etruscans. **184. port and vest,** demeanor and dress. **crest,** the plumes on his helmet. **185. Lucumo,** a name given to an Etruscan noble. **186. Cilnius of Arretium,** the head of a noble Etruscan family. **187. Astur,** from Luna. See note on l. 136. **fourfold shield,** a shield consisting of four layers of hide. **188. brand,** a sword, so called from its flashing brightness. **may wield** : see l. 355. **189. Tolumnius,** another Etruscan chief. **191. Verbenna** : see note on l. 134. **197. Mamilius** : see l. 96 and note. **199–200. Sextus . . . shame** : see note on l. 3.

XXVI–XXX. Give topic. **217. Horatius,** a member of the Lucretian tribe of the patricians. The other two patrician tribes were the Ramnian and the Titian. **220. soon or late.** How do we ordinarily express this ? **229–230. holy maidens . . . flame.** The Vestal virgins, six in number, chosen from the three patrician families. It was their duty to keep burning the 'eternal flame' on Vesta's altar. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 70. **237. strait.** Do not confuse with *straight.* Look up in *Dict.*

XXXI–XXXIV. Give topic. **253. Rome's quarrel,** foreign war waged by Rome. **261. lands . . . portioned,** public lands acquired by conquest, and rented out by the state to private persons. Owing to their political influence, the patricians, in early times, usually secured the larger share of the land, thus causing perpetual grievance to the plebeians. See introduction to these notes. **262. spoils . . . sold.** This fixes the supposed time of the ballad, since, in 391 B.C., Camillus, a Roman commander at Veii, was thus accused of unfair distribution of spoils of battle. **267. Tribunes,** first appointed in 494 B.C., to protect the interests of the plebeians against patrician oppression. Their numbers were successively two, five, and ten. **beard,** to oppose defiantly; originally to grasp a man by the beard. **268. Fathers** : see note on l. 126. **269–270. As . . . cold.** Show how internal dissension thus decreases national spirit. **274. harness,** armor. **278. crow,** crowbar. Why so called ?

XXXV–XXXVI. Give topic. Stanzas XXXV and XXI have been called the finest of the poem. In what respects may this opinion be maintained? Are these stanzas as poetical as V–VIII, LXVIII–LXX ? **288. measured tread.** How does this suggest the vastness of the army ?

XXXVII–XL. Give topic. **301. Tifernum,** a town in Umbria on the Tiber. **304. Ilva's mines.** The iron mines of 'Ilva' (Elba) have always been celebrated. See note on l. 30. **306. Vassal.** Picus, the Umbrian, evidently

held his land as tributary to Clusium. 309. **Nequinum**, an Umbrian town on the river Nar, several miles above its junction with the Tiber. It is situated on a high, steep hill. 319. **Falerii**, an important city of southern Etruria. 321. **Urgo**, a small island between Etruria and Corsica. 322. **rover**, pirate. 323. **Volsinium**, Volsinii, a city of Etruria, just north of the lake of the same name. See l. 49 and note. 326. **Cosa**, a town in Etruria on the coast. 328. **Albinia**, a river of Etruria, emptying into the sea near Cosa. 335. **Ostia**: see note on l. 134. 337. **Campania**, a level province of central Italy, south of Latium. **hinds**, peasants.

XLI–XLVII. Give topic. 340–343. **But now . . . rose.** Why? 344. **Six spears' lengths.** About what distance? 355. **which . . . wield.** The use of 'he' instead of him after 'but' is not to be censured as a solecism here. 'But' in this construction should be considered as a conjunction used adverbially in the sense of only, and not a preposition, — though some authorities regard it as such. See *Century Dict.* 360. **she-wolf's litter.** The Romans are called the brood of the wolf, in reference to the fable of the suckling of Romulus and Remus by the she-wolf. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 365. 361. **Stand at bay.** Explain the figure. 384. **Mount Alvernus**, a mountain in Campania, near the source of the Tiber. 384–389. **As falls . . . head.** Explain the figure in detail.

XLVIII–LII. Give topic. 412–416. **like . . . blood.** Explain the figure in detail. 421–424. **And backward . . . reel.** Describe the picture. 431. **Sextus**: see ll. 199–200, and l. 3 and note.

LIII–LVII. Give topic. 450. **fall.** Why not *falls?* 461. **like a dam.** Explain the comparison. 467–475. **like a horse . . . to the sea.** Explain the figure in detail. 477. **constant**, unmoved.

LVIII–LXIV. Give topic. 488. **Palatinus**, one of the seven hills of Rome, on which, at this time, were the dwellings of most of the patricians. 492. **father Tiber**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 357. 503. **parted lips.** What is indicated by this? 508. **ranks of Tuscany**, *i.e.* the Etrurians. 519. **evil case**, adverse circumstances. 526; 530. **Curse on him**; **Heaven help him.** Contrast the two men as seen here and in ll. 480, 482. 534–541. **And now . . . crowd.** Explain effect of the present tenses in this stanza.

LXV–LXX. Give topic. 542. **corn-land**: see note on l. 261. 546. **molten image**, probably of bronze. 550. **Comitium**, a place of public assembly in Rome, adjoining the Forum. 561. **Volscian**, an important people of Latium, though not of the Latin race. They were constantly at war with the early Romans. 562. **Juno**, the goddess of marriage and childbirth. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 55, 415. 572. **Algidus**, a wooded mountain of Latium, not far from Rome. 574. **oldest cask**, *i.e.* the best wine. 577. **kid . . . spit.** A spit is a pointed stick or skewer on which meat ('the kid') is roasted. 582. **goodman**, master of the house. 587. **told.** Name the dozen or more temporal clauses modifying 'told,' and describe the scenes of Roman home life which these clauses indicate.

What characteristics of the ballad does this poem possess? Compare it, in

respect of verse and poetic style, with *The Lady of the Lake*. In what does its charm especially lie? (INTRODUCTION, pp. xlii, xcii, xcvi.)

TENNYSON

ŒNONE

Paris, son of Priam, was arbiter in the awarding of a golden apple inscribed "For the fairest," which Eris, or Discord, had thrown among the guests assembled at the nuptials of Peleus and Thetis. Juno, Minerva, and Venus each claimed the apple. For an account of this marriage feast and the fateful apple, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 285. At this time Paris was living on Mt. Ida with the wife of his youth, the beautiful nymph Œnone. The reward which Venus gave him for his judgment in her favor brought about his desertion of Œnone — a situation which Tennyson seized upon for this, the earliest of his classical idyls. The poem is written in blank verse, a metre in which Tennyson afterward became especially proficient, undoubtedly excelling all poets since Milton. The poet worked out the plan for *Œnone* while on a tour of the Pyrenees with his friend Hallam, and much of the scenery in which the poem abounds is doubtless borrowed from those mountains. *Œnone* was first published in the volume of 1832,[1] but was somewhat altered in later editions. Sixty years later, the month of Tennyson's death witnessed the publication of a companion poem, *The Death of Œnone* — inferior, however, in every way to this poem of his early genius.

1–21. 1. **Ida.** A thickly wooded mountain range south of Troy. 2. **Ionian hills.** Where are these? 3–5. **The . . . drawn.** Describe the picture; also the picture of the whole landscape. 10. **Gargarus**, a high mountain in the range. 13. **Troas.** The district of northwestern Asia Minor between Ida and 'Ilion's columned citadel,' or Troy. Why is Troy called 'the crown of Troas'? 15. **Œnone**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 304–305. **forlorn**, in its radical sense of deserted or abandoned.

22–62. 22. **mother Ida.** Why mother? **many-fountained**, an epithet modelled after the Greek. Ida was formerly noted for its springs or fountains. 39–40. **as yonder walls Rose slowly**: see the story of the building of the walls of Troy through the music of Apollo's lyre, in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 136, 189. 51. **Simois**, a river of Troas north of Mt. Ida.

63–100. 65. **Hesperian gold**: see Hesperides and the garden of golden apples, as well as the apple of Discord. *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 55, 237, 285. 67 **full-flowing river of speech.** Discuss the figure. 71. **"For the most fair"**: see introduction to these notes. 72. **Oread.** For the mountain nymphs, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 77. 74. **married brows.** What does the poet seem to mean by the epithet 'married'? 79. **Peleus**, father of Achilles. See introduction to notes. 81. **Iris.** For the light-footed goddess of the rain-

[1] This volume, entitled simply *Poems*, is often spoken of as "the volume of 1833," since that was the date on the title-page. The book made its appearance, however, in December, 1832.

bow, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 73. 83–84. **Here, Pallas, Aphrodite.** Juno (Hera), Minerva, and Venus. 94. **And . . . fire.** Explain.

101–131. 102. **crested peacock**, a bird dear to Juno, and her frequent companion. 105. **voice of her**: see Juno in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 54–56. 112. **champaign**: see note on *Horatius* (100). 126. **shepherd.** At the birth of Paris it was prophesied that he would bring ruin to his country. He was accordingly left to perish on Mt. Ida, but was found and adopted into the family of a shepherd of the mountain. 130. **Above the thunder.** Discuss this very expressive phrase.

132–167. 135. **Pallas**: see Minerva in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 56, and show how her speech is characteristic of her. 137. **O'erthwarted . . . spear.** Minerva is frequently represented as carrying a spear transversely in her left hand. 142. **Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control.** Discriminate. 144. **not for power.** Syntax of this phrase? 151. **Sequel of guerdon.** A favorable decision brought about by bribes or rewards could not make me other than I am. 161–164. **until . . . freedom.** This is one of the most difficult passages in Tennyson. In trying to solve it, first determine the syntax of 'pure law'; then decide what the poet means by 'pure law' and by 'perfect freedom'; finally hunt out the subject of 'commeasure' and make sure what this verb means.

168–202. 170–171. **Idalian Aphrodite . . . Paphian wells.** Aphrodite, the Greek name for Venus, signifies the foam-born, from the myth that she arose from the foam of the sea. Look up Venus in *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 65–68. Idalia and Paphos, cities of Cyprus, were dear to Venus. 183. **wife,** Helen, then wife of Menelaus. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 285. 195. **pard**: see note on *Comus* (444). 196. **Eyed . . . star.** Discuss the simile.

203–240. 204. **They . . . pines.** Is this action related to the story of Troy? To whom does 'they' refer? Discuss the fine picture of this stanza, particularly noting 'plumed' (205), 'blue gorge' (206), 'moon-lit slits' (214), and 'trembling' (215). 220. **The Abominable,** Eris or Discord, the goddess of strife. 231–234. **O . . . cloud.** Note how the effect of these apostrophes is heightened by the parallel construction.

241–264. 242. **I will not die alone.** In *The Death of Œnone* (see introduction to notes), Œnone is made to perish upon the funeral pile of her faithless husband. 245. **Dead sounds at night.** To what does this refer? Explain the simile in the following line. 247. **My far-off doubtful purpose.** Explain. 254. **their . . . laughter.** Whose? 259. **the wild Cassandra**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 308. She was the daughter of Priam and had the gift of prophecy, but was fated to have all her predictions unbelieved. Although in the myth, Œnone had a like prophetic power, Tennyson wisely omits this characteristic as tending to detract from the beauty and simplicity of her nature. 261. **armed men.** Cassandra had prophesied the siege and downfall of Troy.

Discuss the form of literature to which this poem belongs. Compare the blank verse, according to the principles mentioned in the INTRODUCTION, pp. lviii–lxvi, ci, with that of Milton's *Comus*.

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

Long before Tennyson had formulated his plans for the *Idylls of the King*, he had become attracted toward the legends of Arthur and his court. The first important fruitage of this interest was seen in the volume of 1832, in the mystical lyric, *The Lady of Shalott*. In this poem Tennyson caught the spirit of the old romance, and expressed it with a poetic grace and perfection of form which he rarely, if ever, afterward surpassed. Though an ethical interpretation of the symbolism has often been suggested, it is perhaps best not to imperil the simple ballad interest by attempting any detailed analysis of the possible mystical (or spiritual) meaning. It should be noted that 'Shalott' is only another form of 'Astolat,' that its lady is the prototype of Elaine, and that this little lyric was afterward elaborated into what has been styled "the most idyllic and most touching of the *Idylls of the King*."

Part I. 5. **Camelot,** the mystical city where King Arthur held his court. See [Note II] *Persons and Places* of the *Idylls of the King*. 9. **The island of Shalott.** But in *Lancelot and Elaine*, Astolat is not an island. 19. **margin,** of the river. 30. **cheerly,** an archaic form of cheerily. The archaic and purely artistic words of the poem make it more poetical, if less human and touching, than the *Elaine*.

Part II. 38. **A magic web.** Part II, with its magic web and mirror, may be intended to represent the world of images and shadows, the dream-life of childhood, beyond which for some mortals it is fatal to go. Part III, then, would be the awakening of passion, the escape into a world of realities — an escape that for the lady can mean only death. 40. **stay,** *i.e.* pause in her weaving. 52. **churls,** in its radical sense of rustics. 60. **mirror blue.** Why blue?

Part III. 77. **Sir Lancelot,** the chief of Arthur's knights. Note that in this poem, even more than in the *Lancelot and Elaine*, the knight is guiltless of the maiden's death. 84. **Galaxy,** the Milky Way with its innumerable and indistinguishable stars. Look up derivation of word. 87. **baldric**: see note on *Prologue* (116). 96–99. **As . . . Shalott.** Analyze the figure. What is the purpose of so stressing the brightness of Lancelot and his equipment? 111. **water-lily**: see l. 7. 114–115. **Out . . . side.** Significance of this? 116. **The curse**: see l. 40.

Part IV. In the *Lancelot and Elaine* the lady is not set afloat upon the river until after her death. 121. **low sky raining.** Observe harmony between scene and action. 142. **willowy hills.** Discuss the epithet.

ULYSSES

The *Odyssey* (see *Cl. M.*, pp. 285–287, 313–337) brought the adventures of Ulysses, after the Trojan War, down to his return to Ithaca, and his retirement in undisturbed possession of wife and kingdom. More than two thousand years later Dante in his *Inferno* took up the myth, and described how the ancient hero, growing tired of repose, collected his followers together,

incited them to action by a stirring speech, constructed a fleet, and set sail for the "happy isles" of the western ocean. Tennyson here presents the speech by which Ulysses may be supposed to have aroused his men. This poem was first published in the volume of 1842.

1–32. 2. **barren crags**, Ithaca, the kingdom of Ulysses, a rocky island off the west coast of Greece. 3. **aged wife.** For Penelope, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 285, 330–336. 10. **Hyades.** This constellation under certain conditions indicates stormy weather. For origin of the constellation, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 174. 17. **ringing plains.** Why 'ringing'? 19–21. **Yet . . . move.** Explain the figure. 26. **Little remains**, *i.e.* of his own life (l. 25). Perhaps not more than three years (l. 29) are still left to him.

33–70. 33. **Telemachus**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 286, 331–335. 35. **discerning to fulfil**, understanding how to carry out. 40. **decent**, in its radical meaning, from Lat. *decens*. 53. **strove**, in the Trojan War. See *Cl. M.*, pp. 291, 298, etc. 60–61. **baths Of all the western stars.** The stars were supposed to set in the western ocean. See *Cl. M.*, p. 75. 62. **gulfs . . . down.** This actually happened, according to Dante, for Ulysses never returned. 63. **Happy Isles**, or Isles of the Blessed: See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 81–82. 64. **Achilles**: see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 278–281, 284–304, especially pp. 303–304.

TITHONUS

Tithonus was published in 1864. There is a finer balance here between the Greek and the Romantic than in almost any other of Tennyson's poems on classical themes. In its severity of outline and reticence of emotion it is distinctly Grecian. In its appeal to the heart it breathes the atmosphere of modern Romanticism. As some one has said, "You can weep for Tithonus, but you cannot imagine him shedding tears for himself." In form the poem furnishes an example of some of Tennyson's very best blank verse. For the story of Tithonus and Aurora the student should see a *Classical Dictionary*, or *Classic Myths*, pp. 196–198. (On *Romantic*, see INTRODUCTION, p. civ.)

1–42. 3. **Man . . . beneath.** It would be hard to find a better expression of the transitory nature of man's life. 7–10. **Here . . . halls of morn.** The scene of the poem is the palace of the Morning in the East. 18. **Hours**, the attendants of the Dawn. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 51, 55. 25. **the silver star**, the morning star. 39. **blind the stars.** Explain the metaphor by which the eyes of Aurora 'blind the stars.' **wild team.** For the chariot and horses of Aurora, see *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, p. 192. Describe the picture of this 'wild team' in ll. 40–42. 42. **twilight**, half-light, *i.e.* dawn.

43–76. 62–63. **Like . . . towers**: *cf. Œnone* (39–40). Tithonus was the son of Laomedon, and had consequently seen Apollo at work upon the walls of Troy. See *Cl. D.* or *Cl. M.*, pp. 136, 189. 71. **grassy barrows**, graves. 75. **empty courts.** Explain the epithet. Point out in the poem, and discuss, the several passages in which the description of Aurora figuratively portrays the coming of the dawn. Describe and name the various kinds of poetic

figure here used. Scan any paragraph, indicating the variety of *cæsuræ* and other pauses; also the peculiarities of feet and of sound sequence. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. xliii, lviii–lxvii, lxix–lxxvi.)

CROSSING THE BAR

This little poem was written over sixty years after the publication of Tennyson's first book of verse. It would be hard to imagine a more fitting climax to this long period of endeavor, or a more triumphant expression of the aged poet's simple faith, than is contained in these sixteen short lines. It has been called a poem above criticism, as beautiful an utterance as any in all the range of English verse — a poem in which, says Sir Alfred Lyall, "The noiseless indraw of the ebb-tide from the land back into the ocean is a magnificent image of the soul's quiet parting from life on earth and its absorption into the vastness of infinity."

Hallam Tennyson, in the memoirs of his father's life, has given the following account of the poem's composition: "*Crossing the Bar* was written in my father's eighty-first year, on a day in October when we came from Aldworth to Farringford. Before reaching Farringford he had the Moaning of the Bar in his mind, and after dinner he showed me this poem written out. I said, 'That is the crown of your life's work.' He answered, 'It came in a moment.' He explained the 'Pilot' as that Divine and Unseen who is always guiding us. A few days before my father's death he said to me, 'Mind you put *Crossing the Bar* at the end of my poems.'"

BROWNING

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD

Both this and *Home Thoughts, from the Sea*, which follows, first appeared in 1845 in *Dramatic Romances and Lyrics*. Browning has shown no finer appreciation of the beauty and freshness of English springtide than in this little nature lyric. The words are uttered in a foreign land by one whose heart is yearning for the delights of the English spring.

4. **unaware,** unexpectedly. 11–14. **Hark . . . thrush.** The picture seems to be that of the thrush perching on the twig of the pear tree, and bending it down so violently that a shower of petals and dewdrops is scattered on the grass beneath. This description of the thrush who wants to prove his ability to repeat his song is as famous as it is charming.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA

In this lyric we see a patriotic Englishman stirred by scenes which bring before his mind the glory of his country. Here is Gibraltar which, at the close of the eighteenth century, England successfully defended against the combined assaults of France and Spain. Here is Cape Trafalgar, where, in 1805, the brave Nelson defeated the French fleet; and, dying in the battle,

left as a heritage to his countrymen his famous message, "This day England expects every man to do his duty."

The metrical form of these lines is trochaic octameter catalectic, like that in Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*. **1–4. Nobly . . . gray.** Describe the scene. Professor Corson points out that it forms "a characteristic Turner picture." **5–6. say, Whoso turns.** Let him, whosoever turns as I, etc., — say. **7. Jove's planet.** To what does the poet refer?

EVELYN HOPE

Professor Saintsbury, who is far from being a Browning enthusiast, says in his *History of Nineteenth Century Literature:* "It is as a lyric poet that Browning ranks highest; and in this highest class it is impossible to refuse him all but the highest rank, in some few cases the very highest. He understood love pretty thoroughly; and when a lyric poet understands love thoroughly there is little doubt of his position." In the list of Browning's best love lyrics, *Evelyn Hope* (first published in *Men and Women*, 1855) takes a very high rank as one of the most musical and tender. The theme is that of a love which, from its conditions, could not be reciprocated, yet would prove undying.

15. unawares, unexpectedly. *Cf. Home Thoughts, from Abroad* (4). **20. Made . . . dew.** Of the four elements — earth, air, fire, and water — the omission of the first here is significant. **34. I shall say.** Though this construction is somewhat involved, it seems to mean, In some future world when I have at last the right to claim you, the time will come when I shall ask, — 'What meant' — etc.? The remainder of the lyric, save the last four lines, consists of the words he imagines himself saying to her in that future world.

MY LAST DUCHESS

My Last Duchess, published in 1842 in *Dramatic Lyrics*, is one of the earliest specimens of a kind of poetry in which Browning was destined to excel. This, "the poet's favorite art form," is known as the "dramatic monologue." In it some speaker appears, talking not to himself as in a soliloquy, but to a silent second person whose presence is to be inferred from the words of him who speaks. The monotony of a soliloquy is avoided by this means, since the interest consists not only in revealing the character of the speaker, but also in suggesting the effect which his arguments or appeals make upon the imaginary hearer. Sometimes the speaker directs a question to his auditor; sometimes he answers a look or gesture; at all times he speaks in his own character — and hence such a poem does not necessarily give any hint of the real thoughts or feelings of the poet himself. The dramatic monologue constituted a large part of Browning's poetry. It is generally written in blank verse, though in the present instance it rhymes in couplets.

Nowhere has Browning made more artistic or effective use of this method than in *My Last Duchess*. The speaker is the Duke of Ferrara, an arrogant and

cold-hearted Italian, whose only interests are his pride of aristocratic lineage and his satisfaction in the treasures of art which he has collected. One of the paintings in which he takes most pleasure — because of its æsthetic qualities, not from any other emotion than those aroused by the contemplation and possession of rare and beautiful art — is a portrait of his young wife who has recently died. The envoy of a certain wealthy count has come to him to conclude arrangements for a new marriage between the widowed duke and the count's daughter. This little matter of business being finished to the duke's satisfaction, the latter good-naturedly and complacently entertains his guest by showing him through his picture gallery and explaining as they proceed. (On the dramatic monologue, see INTRODUCTION, p. ci.)

1–21. 3. **Fra Pandolf,** a name of the poet's invention. 'Fra' signifies brother, denoting that this imaginary artist was a monk. 5–6. **I said . . . design.** From the 'depth and passion' of the portrait one might think that the artist was enamored with the Duchess. So the duke is accustomed to emphasize the fact that the painter was '*Fra* Pandolf,' whose monastic vows should preclude any such possibility. 9–10. **since . . . I.** "It's too precious a work of art to be intrusted to anybody else." (Corson.) 'But' here is used adverbially in the sense of only; hence the nominative 'I.' See note on *Horatius* (355).

21–34. Characterize the Duchess as portrayed in these lines. **25. favor,** some gift, such as a jewelled breast-pin. 33. **nine-hundred-years-old name:** see introduction to notes.

34–46. Characterize the duke from his unconscious portrayal of himself. **40. lessoned,** taught or instructed. 45. **I gave commands.** It was doubtless the tone and spirit of the commands, rather than the words, that crushed the young wife's spirit. **46. Then all smiles stopped together.** On these words Berdoe remarks, "The concentrated tragedy of this line is a good example of the poet's power of compressing a whole life's story into two or three words."

46–56. Show the artistic effect of thus abruptly dismissing the subject, and turning to the business at hand. 54–55. **Notice . . . sea-horse.** Several commentators have suggested that in these lines there is a "reference to the way he has tamed and killed his lady." Would this interpretation be artistic? For what evident reason were the lines introduced? **56. Claus of Innsbruck,** another imaginary artist.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

This poem, published in *Men and Women* (1855), is one of Browning's best and most characteristic dramatic monologues. Andrea del Sarto (Andrew, son of the tailor), as he was nicknamed by his contemporaries, was born in Florence in 1487. After an apprenticeship as goldsmith and wood-carver he studied art, and, by the time of his early manhood, became known as "the faultless painter." The spiritual element is supposed to be lacking in

his work, but in technique and accuracy of drawing he had hardly an equal. When twenty-five years of age he married a certain Lucrezia, a woman of wonderful physical beauty, but dishonest, vain, extravagant, and with a soul utterly incapable of appreciating her husband's art.

In 1518 the French king, Francis I, who had seen some of Andrea's work, invited him to Paris to paint in the French court. Here the artist spent several of the best months of his life, "painted proudly and prospered every way." But before long his wife wrote to him from Florence, urging him to come home. The king agreed to this, on condition that he soon return; and, moreover, intrusted him with a large sum of money, with which he was to purchase in Italy works of art to be brought back to France. Lucrezia, finding out that he had this money, persuaded him to appropriate it to building a house for himself in Florence. Even after he had done this he was inclined to go back to France to take his punishment; but the entreaties of his wife, and his infatuation for her, decided otherwise. Andrea is conceived by Browning as never rising beyond the sphere of technical correctness, — as "faultless" but uninspired to the last. Still there are paintings of his that might justify one in disagreeing with this verdict. He died of the plague in 1531, at the early age of forty-three, his wife surviving him for over forty years.

Just how far Andrea's genius was blighted by this unhappy marriage is an open question, and has formed a frequent theme for discussion. Some critics insist that Browning's poem lays the shortcomings of Andrea rather at his own door than at that of Lucrezia. One commentator, after a study of the poem, declares, "No woman ruined his soul; he had no soul to ruin." Suffice it to say that, although his wife was notoriously false to him, he toiled for her, loved her, and clung to her to the end. She was the model for many of his pictures, and it was from one of these pictures that Browning got the idea for his poem. Mr. John Kenyon, a friend of the Brownings, had asked the poet to procure for him a copy of the portrait of Andrea del Sarto and Lucrezia, painted by Andrea, and now in a gallery of Florence. No copy could be found, however; so Browning wrote and sent as a substitute this poem, which was intended to represent what he himself had got out of (or read into) this portrait of husband and wife. The scene is an open window of the house in Florence which had been built with the stolen gold. The time is evening. The painter is speaking in answer to his wife's demand for money for her lover (or 'cousin,' as she styles him).

1–32. 5–7. **I'll . . . price.** What do these lines suggest as to Andrea's present ideals of his art? Show how the opening lines strike the keynote of the whole poem. 15. **Fiesole** (pronounced Fyĕs'-ō-lā), a little city about three miles from Florence, built upon a hill above the river Arno. 16. **use,** are accustomed to do. 23–25. **You . . . model:** see introduction to these notes.

33–53. 35. **A common grayness.** This tone was characteristic in much of Andrea's painting. 41–42. **chapel top . . . convent-wall,** evidently just

opposite the artist's home. 49–53. **Love . . . lie.** One editor says, "This is not piety, but Andrea's characteristic way of evading responsibility." Do you agree?

54–103. 54. **You don't understand:** see introduction to notes. 57. **cartoon:** see *Dict.* for definition of this word in this, its original sense. 60–67. **I can do . . . all of it:** see introduction to notes. 76–82. **Yet do much less . . . hand of mine:** see introduction to notes. Professor Dowden quotes as follows from Vasari, "Had this master possessed a somewhat bolder and more elevated mind, had he been as much distinguished for higher qualifications as he was for genius, he would, beyond all doubt, have been without an equal." But despite the matchless technique of Del Sarto, his was, after all, only a "low-pulsed craftsman's hand." In a word, he is represented as lacking soul. 83–87. **Their works . . . sit here.** Discuss this passage. 90–96. **I . . . care.** Morello is one of the peaks of the Apennines, north of Florence. Men may criticise its hue or outline if they wish, but the mountain is indifferent to it — is above criticism. How does Andrea apply this illustration to his own case?

104–144. 105. **The Urbinate.** Raphael, born at Urbino, 1483, was one of the greatest of Italian painters. He died in 1520. Accordingly, the date of this monologue is fixed at 1525, six years before Andrea's death. 106. **George Vasari.** Giorgio Vasari (1512–1574), who was once a pupil of Andrea, in his *Lives of the Artists*, is the one great original authority for the biographies of Italian painters. 108. **with kings and popes to see.** Much of Raphael's best work was the frescoing of the rooms and corridors of the Vatican. His art was distinguished by wonderful dignity, reserve, and nobility of soul, which Andrea recognizes as far outweighing his own technical skill. 110. **for it gives way.** He attains heaven by reaching 'above' and 'through' his art. 120. **Nay, Love,** evidently in reply to a gesture on the part of Lucrezia. 130. **Agnolo.** Michael Angelo (or, more correctly, Agnolo) was born in 1475, and died, when nearly ninety years of age, in 1564. He was both sculptor and painter, and excelled equally in technical skill and grandeur of conception. His greatest work was the decoration of the Sistine Chapel.

145–176. 146. **Paris lords,** who knew of the embezzlement of the money intrusted to him by King Francis. See introduction to notes. 150. **Fontainebleau,** a town some forty miles from Paris, containing a famous palace of the French kings. 166. **And had you not grown restless:** see introduction to notes. 173. **there,** in your heart. These lines are regarded by some as an example of Browning's obscurity. Are they susceptible of more than one interpretation? Browning afterward changed the words 'have ended' to 'reach and stay.' Discuss whether this alteration throws light upon the meaning.

177–210. 177–179. **Rafael . . . wife,** the words with which men will 'excuse' him. Raphael's Madonna is more spiritual, — better fitted for religious devotions, — since Andrea's was modelled on an earthly love. 178. **The Roman's.** The latter years of Raphael's life were spent in Rome. 186–

187. When . . . see: see note on l. 108. **199. What he?** In Andrea's child-like eagerness to recount to his wife the story of this splendid compliment, he has failed to notice that she is paying no attention. **201. chance, so lost.** To what does he refer? **202. is,** the subject is 'all I care for' (198). **207. I mean . . . more.** Point out the pathos of this line. **210. cue-owls,** owls common to Mediterranean regions. Their name is derived from their peculiar cry. The English name for them is scops owl.

211–243. 212–213. house We built: see introduction to notes. **218. gold I did cement them with.** Explain the figure. **219. Must you go?** The lover for whom Lucrezia has been seeking money here summons her by whistling. See l. 267. **241. scudi.** A *scudo* (pl. *scudi*) is an Italian silver coin, worth about a dollar.

244–267. 250. My . . . want. Vasari says that Andrea abandoned his "poor father and mother" when he became infatuated with Lucrezia. **255–256. Some . . . try.** Let some good son try to paint. **259. here,** on earth. **261–262. Four . . . reed:** see *Revelation* xxi. 15–17. **263. Leonard,** Leonardo de Vinci (1452–1519), who shares with Raphael and Michael Angelo the distinction of being the greatest among Italian artists. With his *Last Supper* painting in Italy probably reached its zenith.

RABBI BEN EZRA

Ben Ezra, as Browning has called him, — though more properly Ibn Ezra or Abenezra, — was a learned Jewish rabbi who was born at Toledo in Spain, about 1092, and died, probably at Rome, about 1167. He was a poet of some ability, an eminent scholar, and a distinguished thinker. He left Spain in 1140 on account of an outbreak against the Jews, and, though a great traveller, spent much of the rest of his life in Italy. As far as can be judged from what we know of Ben Ezra, the beliefs assigned to him in this poem were very like the creed of his actual teaching. He is said to have had faith in a future life; to have insisted upon freedom of thought; to have taught that the higher, or spiritual, soul of man is in eternal conflict with the lower, or animal, soul, — the passions and desires; and to have held that old age, when wisdom has triumphed over passion, is the most important period of man's activity. Indeed, it has been said that in the case of Ben Ezra himself all of his writing was done after he had reached his fiftieth year.

This poem was first published in the *Dramatis Personæ* of 1864. Its poetic style differs widely from that of the blank verse ordinarily used by Browning, and may profitably be studied with a view to the harmonies of sound and sense. Though *Rabbi Ben Ezra* is unquestionably difficult, it is at the same time of great nobility of thought and marked originality. It shows Browning as a profound and yet poetic reasoner. Through the rabbi the poet is giving us much of his own philosophy of life; and every careful reader will find here a lesson that should hearten, comfort, and sustain.

1–30. 1. Grow . . . me. Ben Ezra in his old age is supposed to be ad-

dressing a youth. Survey life with me, he says, and you will see that it is best and fullest in its last years. Thus the poem opens with a glorification of old age. 7–11. **Not that . . . Youth sighed; Not that . . . it yearned.** These clauses are objects of 'remonstrate' (15). These hopes and indecisions of youth, though they render his 'brief years' more or less profitless, are really valuable as furnishing his chief distinction from the lower forms of life (16–18). 24. **Irks . . . beast,** does care irk, etc.? The bird and the beast are troubled by no doubts, no "obstinate questionings." Their material comfort is to them the end of life. 29–30. **Nearer . . . believe.** Point out the reasoning by which we are shown to be allied to God rather than to the lower animals.

31–60. 39. **Shall . . . fail.** Not achievement but aspiration and effort are the measures of success. The brute creation may achieve its own perfection — may get all it aims for, but its aims are low. 44. **Whose . . . suit,** whose soul is satisfied with providing creature comforts. 49. **Yet gifts . . . use.** The perfect bodily powers given to us must and can justify their existence. 50–51. **I own . . . power.** The earlier part of man's life gives him power; it is the time of struggle and achievement, the time when man 'lives and learns.' 52. **dole,** derived from deal; *i.e.* the share dealt out. 57. **I . . . too.** The latter part of man's life teaches him Love as a necessary complement to the power. Both are motive forces of the universe.

61–102. 61. **pleasant is this flesh.** The ascetic is not the true ideal of manhood; the body in its place is good and beautiful, and we should not allow ourselves to believe (67–72) that our soul's success is *in spite of* the body. 75. **term,** a resting-place or limit. 76. **Thence,** *i.e.* from youth, after having received the inheritance of the wisdom of maturity. Lessons have been learned (54) which make the life of the man wiser and his actions surer than in youth. This is the time (85–90) for self-testing. 84. **indue,** in its radical sense (Lat. *induere*). See *Dict.* 91–96. **For . . . day.** When evening is about to fade into night, a brief moment seems to delay the deepening gloom ('the deed'). Analyze the metaphor and make its application. Whence comes the 'whisper from the west' (94)? 98. **lifted o'er its strife,** *i.e.* the calm of old age. 100. **rage,** eager passion or desire.

103–150. 106. **Here,** in old age. 109–114. **As . . . Further.** These lines furnish a suggestive antithesis between the respective functions of youth and of old age. 110. **acts uncouth,** hesitating and clumsy endeavors. *Cf.* note on ll. 7–11. 113. **tempt,** make trial — the radical meaning of the word. 115–120. **Enough . . . alone.** Thus old age is the proper time for absolute knowledge. It has no concern with the noisy uncertainties of youth. This confidence of old age gives it serenity, the "faith that looks through death," the "philosophic mind" of which Wordsworth, too, has spoken. Only in old age, accordingly, — the time of this "absolute knowledge" of the soul, — can we take the proper measure of our past endeavors, discover whether we or our adversaries were right (123–132). 121. **Be there . . . small.** Let there be at last a judgment as to the greatness or littleness of man's actions in the past. 124, 125. **I, they.** Understand 'whom' after each

word. Browning frequently suppresses the relative. **133–138. Not . . . trice.** Performance — actual things accomplished — is not the measure of success, despite the world's opinion to the contrary. **139–150. But all . . . God:** *cf.* note to l. 39. Also *cf.* with this passage *Lyc.* (78–84). **141. passed,** passed over through lack of proper estimate. **150. whose wheel the pitcher shaped.** This introduces the fine metaphor of the Potter's wheel with which the poem ends. See *Isaiah* lxiv. 8 and *Jeremiah* xviii. 2–6. God is the Potter. We, fixed to the wheel of life or time, are the clay which he shapes to his own uses. See the cut under *Potter's wheel* in the *Century* or some other dictionary. Our doubts and fears, joys and desires, perplexities and agonizings after truth, pressing upon us as the wheel revolves, serve as machinery meant to turn forth the clay (that is the human soul) in the form fit for the Potter's service. Thus the actually permanent is secured through what we had regarded as circumstance and change.

151–192. 154–156. Thou . . . seize to-day, an apostrophe to the believer in that kind of Epicurean philosophy which lives only in the present; thinks all things change and pass away; does not realize the permanence of the soul's achievements. **157–158. All that is, at all, Lasts ever:** *cf.* the similar idea in *Abt Vogler* (69). **165. This Present . . . arrest,** as indicated in the speech of l. 156. **168. impressed,** moulded or shaped. **169–174. What . . . stress.** The ornamentations on the cup. The earlier grooves are made by the pressure of the Potter's tool upon our youthful lives. The skull-things proceed from the sterner pressure of the tool in our later years. But neither the Cupids at the base, nor the skull-things at the rim of the pitcher, are the end for which it was made. Its end is to be used as a drinking vessel at which the Master may slake his thirst (175–180). Discuss in general the figure of the cup, its ornamentations, and its uses. Especially explain l. 180. **179. Master's lips.** Mankind is being shaped for future communion with God. See *Matthew* xxvi. 29. **185. With . . . rife.** What is meant by these 'shapes and colors'? **186. my end, to slake Thy thirst.** That is to say, "man's chief end is to glorify God"; but to this function the Shorter Catechism wisely adds the compensation, "and to enjoy Him forever." Neither face of the shield is complete without the other. **190. My times be in Thy hand:** *cf. Psalms* xxiv. 15. **191. Perfect,** a verb. **192. Let age . . . the same.** Thus it is age, and age alone, which is able to understand the significance of the whole of life. Accordingly for the youth whom the rabbi is addressing —

> "The best is yet to be,
> The last of life for which the first was made."

Point out the stanzas that show the meaning of life to be the education and maturing of the soul; also those that suggest the doctrine of immortality. Does the rabbi make any allowance for the free action of the human will in this development of the human soul? Indicate lines that may be regarded as touchstones.

EPILOGUE (TO ASOLANDO)

Like Tennyson's *Crossing the Bar*, this *Epilogue* may be regarded as a valedictory — a great poet's last message to the world. Berdoe says in his *Browning Cyclopedia* that the volume containing these lines "was published in London on the very day on which the poet died in Venice." The following reference to this poem is also quoted from the *Pall Mall Gazette* of February 1, 1890. It was one evening just before his death illness that Browning was reading to his daughter-in-law and sister, from the printer's proof sheets, the third stanza of this *Epilogue*. "He said, 'It almost looks like bragging to say this, and as if I ought to cancel it; but it's the simple truth; and as it's true, it shall stand.' His faith knew no doubting. In all trouble, against all evil, he stood firm." This *Epilogue* was written in Browning's extreme old age, and sums up magnificently the aim and spirit of the poet's whole life. "Strive and thrive — fight on" is the noble and characteristic trumpet-call which we find in this, the last line of his last poem. It was a call which he had been sounding, in one form or another, for nearly sixty years.

ARNOLD

THE FORSAKEN MERMAN

The Forsaken Merman, though by no means the deepest or most pretentious of Arnold's poems, is, nevertheless, one of the most imaginative and musical, and unquestionably the best known and most popular. The causes of its popularity are not far to seek. The music of its rhythm is exquisite. The pictures it presents are clear and definite. Its element of pathos is supremely touching and rings true. The ethical problem involved is not obtruded on the reader, yet is the vital motive of the poem. Has this mother saved her soul by her action, and, if so, was it worth saving? A woman is married to a merman. Happiness is theirs until the wife discovers that continuance in this unhallowed union will involve the loss of her soul. And so it is that —

"She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea."

The Forsaken Merman was written in 1849 and published in Arnold's first book of poems.

1–47. **6. wild white horses.** The merman and his children have left their sea-caves and approached the shore, where they are surrounded by the foamy breakers of the surf. See l. 21. **26. little grey church**: see ll. 56–59. **34. silver bell**: see l. 54. What is gained by introducing the sound of the church bell into this passage? **37. spent**, in passing through the water. **42. mail**, the scales which cover and protect the snakes. **45. aye.** This word is frequently mispronounced. With which line does it rhyme?

48–84. **53–54. She comb'd . . . far-off bell.** Show how this couplet suggests the whole tragedy of the poem. **61. kind sea-caves.** Why 'kind'?

64. were we long alone? What are we to understand by this question, and by the other so often repeated, — 'Was it yesterday?' How long has she really been gone? **68. down.** Meaning? **69. sea-stocks.** A flowering plant growing upon the seacoasts of certain countries. **72–82. From the church . . . shut stands the door.** Contrast the two pictures, — the one outside the church, the other inside.

85–107. Draw the picture of the mother as outlined in the first and the last half of this stanza. How reconcile 'joyfully' (88 and 95) with 'sigh' (101 and 105)? Is it a change of mood, or is one of the moods only pretended and not real? Does the merman *see* this or only imagine it? **91. holy well,** evidently a well of miraculous powers near the church of the little 'white-walled town.'

108–143. 118. **A ceiling of amber,** thus contrasting the peacefulness of their sea home with the storms of the upper air. **124. But,** etc. Does this conjunction indicate that the two stanzas are to be contrasted? If so, what are the elements of contrast? Compare the songs which end each stanza. **127. spring-tides,** the tides which happen at, or soon after, the new and the full moon. But this is high tide. What, then, can the poet mean by 'low'? **129. heaths starr'd with broom.** Look up words and describe picture. **131. blanch'd.** Explain.

RUGBY CHAPEL

The chapel at Rugby is the burial place of Matthew Arnold's father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of the school, and known to all boys as "the Doctor" of *Tom Brown's School Days at Rugby*. Dr. Arnold was born on the Isle of Wight, 1795, and was educated at Winchester and at Oxford, where, at the age of twenty, he became a Fellow of Oriel. After leaving Oxford, in 1819, he opened a private school at Laleham on the Thames, which he conducted for nine years, and from which he was elected to the position of headmaster at Rugby. Rugby at that time ranked far below the more important English public schools, such as Eton, Harrow, or Winchester. The moral tone of the school was bad; the standards were low; self-indulgence, lawlessness, and contempt for authority were characteristics common among the boys. Such, however, was Arnold's ability, tact, and energy that within the fourteen years of his headmastership he raised Rugby to a place among the best of English schools, and gave it a name for inspiring in its boys seriousness of purpose and high ideals of Christian manhood.

Rugby Chapel was written in November, 1857, when the elder Arnold had been dead fifteen years. At the time of his father's death Matthew Arnold, then a student at Oxford, was in his twentieth year. Much of his boyhood and youth had been spent in the companionship and under the guidance of his father, and this poem, accordingly, has a deeper and tenderer significance than belongs to most elegies. (On assonance, see INTRODUCTION, p. lxxix.)

1–36. What is the metre of *Rugby Chapel*, what effect does the swing of the lines produce, and how is this effect suited to the subject and the mood of

the poem? Does the absence of rhyme detract from the effect? It may be noted that Arnold has used the same metrical system in other elegiac poems — such as *Heine's Grave* and *Haworth Churchyard*. 1–13. **Coldly . . . laid.** Describe the scene as given in this first stanza. 16–17. **That word . . . Brings thee back.** How does the word 'gloom' bring back his father? 30. **Sudden.** Dr. Arnold died of heart disease, June 12, 1842, when only in his forty-seventh year.

37–57. Matthew Arnold was most liberal in his religious beliefs. Many tenets that some Christians regard as vital were not so to him; but rarely in any poet do we find a belief in a future life stronger or more nobly expressed than in this passage.

58–123. 58–72. **What is . . . gone.** Characterize and describe the type of mankind described in this division. 73–83. **And . . . grave.** Likewise characterize this class of men and show their aims. 80–81. **Not . . . Fruitless,** not to die fruitless without action. In the same way other obscurities of the poem may be cleared up by simple transposition of words. 84–109. **We . . . rocks.** Show what experiences of life are symbolized by the various details of this fine metaphor, *e.g.* what is meant by the 'path' (84), the 'goal' (85), the 'gorges' (88), the 'storm' (90), etc.? 110. **gaunt and taciturn host.** For what does this 'host' stand?

124–144. In the metaphor of these lines the poet beautifully suggests the secret of his father's greatness. Point out the characteristics of Dr. Arnold, here outlined, which distinguish his life from such a life as that described in ll. 117–123.

145–170. It is everywhere Matthew Arnold's teaching that the world can be saved only through its few supremely noble men, 'helpers and friends of mankind.' How has his father's life enforced this belief? 168. **Yours is the praise,** *i.e.* it is due to you.

171–208. In these lines the poet reverts to his metaphor of the journey of life (ll. 84–109), and indicates the work in store for those 'servants of God' whose souls are of the same heroic mould as that of Dr. Arnold.

DOVER BEACH

In his *Primer of English Literature*, Stopford Brooke says of Arnold, "He embodied in his poetry, even in his early book of 1852, the restlessness, the dimness, the hopelessness of a world which had lost the vision of the ancient stars and could cling to nothing but a stoic conduct." In none of Arnold's poems is this view more clearly expressed than in *Dover Beach*. The dominant note of the poem is despair, yet there is a hint of the fortitude, the patience, the perseverance with which it is necessary for man to bear his lot. The poem is especially notable for its restraint of utterance and stoical self-repression and resignation. In all ways it is thoroughly characteristic of a large part of Arnold's poetical work. It originally formed part of the volume of 1867.

The first stanza in wonderfully musical lines paints the scene before the

poet. But what is the prevailing note of the division? What is the thought referred to in l. 19? Explain the metaphor of the third division and show what Arnold means by this ebbing of 'the sea of faith.' What are the 'naked shingles of the world' (28)? In the fourth division can you find any hope in the midst of the 'confused alarms'? Help, Arnold always taught, must come from the soul itself. What is meant in l. 37 by the 'ignorant armies' which 'clash by night'?

REQUIESCAT

In this almost perfect dirge, attention need be called only to the melancholy music of the verse and to the rare taste which is shown in the choice of title. *Requiescat* — May she rest — is a wish exquisitely appropriate for her whose 'heart was tired' and whose soul 'yearning' for peace.

LOWELL

THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

The Vision of Sir Launfal was written in 1848, when Lowell was only in his thirtieth year. This poem has been very justly praised as one of the best America has ever produced; indeed, in many respects, it deserves to rank very high among the noblest poems of the English language. It has been said that it was composed in a single day; that its author became so absorbed in his theme that he hurried it to completion almost without pause. Traces of this haste may possibly be detected in a certain lack of unity. Critics have pointed out, for instance, that the two preludes, though in themselves charming little nature poems, are not sufficiently vital to the story as a whole. Though this may be true, it is doubtless equally true that no one would be willing to dispense with these preludes or to change them in any important particular. Stedman, in his *Poets of America*, expresses the belief "that *The Vision of Sir Launfal* owed its success quite as much to a presentation of nature as to its misty legend. It really is," he continues, "a landscape poem of which the lovely passage, 'And what is so rare as a day in June?' and the wintry prelude to Part Second are the specific features."

The Vision of Sir Launfal is, however, much more than that. In spite of its "misty" mediæval setting, the poem is essentially ethical, and as such is far greater than any mere "landscape poem." Its theme is the brotherhood of man, a revelation of that 'thread of the all-sustaining beauty which runs through all and doth all unite,' a contrast between a true ideal of the service of God and a false ideal of that service, a portrayal of that charity which "suffereth long and is kind." So much for its teaching. As to its art, *The Vision of Sir Launfal* is one of the most purely poetical of all Lowell's poems. The diction, the figurative language, the music of the verse, the exquisite setting of the story, the fitting expression of keen insight and tender human sympathy — all unite to make this poem a masterpiece.

Lowell has left the following account of the Holy Grail, whose quest forms the *motif* for his plot: —

"According to the mythology of the Romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus Christ partook of the last supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but, one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the Knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the Romance of King Arthur. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems.

"The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and, to serve its purposes, I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the date of King Arthur's reign."

Thus we see that this is not an Arthurian legend; nor is it in the strictest sense of the word a story of knightly adventure. At the same time it is sufficiently tinged with the spirit of old romance to be included properly among these "poems of chivalry."

1–8. This may be called a general prelude to the poem, and really precedes "Prelude to Part First." Show the relation to the poem and trace the figure running through these lines, noting that the chords struck by the organist symbolize similar chords sounded by the poet in his preludes, each chord bringing him nearer to his ultimate theme. What is the versification of these lines? **4. bridge.** What is this bridge and what does it span? Trace the steps by which the poet conducts the reader over this bridge from his everyday world to the world of the vision. The story is rich in poetic figures and memory-images; the student should apply in the analysis of them the paragraphs on *Creative Expression* in the INTRODUCTION, pp. xlii–xlvii.

9–32. 9–12. The *first* chord struck by the poet. 9–10. **Not . . . lie,** suggested by Wordsworth's *Ode* on the *Intimations of Immortality*, Stanza V, especially l. 66. But the older poet's thought (see notes on *Ode*, Stanzas V and VI) is very different from that of Lowell, who is saying that we fail to see heaven, not because we have forgotten it, but because we are wilfully blind to it. 12. **Sinais climb,** *i.e.* get face to face with God. See *Exodus* xix. 17–20. 13–20. The *second* chord. Explain its relation to the preceding lines. 13. **manhood,** the emphatic word of the line. Why? 14. **fallen,** from what? **traitor,** to what? 15. **prophecies,** of what? 16. **mountain.** Observe the contrasts, in all these lines, between nature and man, *e.g.* the firm and stable 'mountain' striving with the 'faint heart.' 17. **druid wood.** Show suggestiveness of epithet. 21–32. The *third* chord. Show connection and meaning as before. 21–24. **Earth . . . in.** What does Earth give us, and what is its price? Discuss the three instances, and show why chosen. 25–28. **At . . . tasking.** What is 'the devil's booth' as distinguished from

'Earth'? Discuss the instances given. **27. pay.** In what way do we pay our lives? **29–30. 'Tis . . . asking.** What is meant here by 'heaven' and 'God'? **31–32. No . . . comer.** Two transitional lines, introducing the next theme or chord.

33–56. The *fourth* chord. Name the various things which together make up this New England June day, for it is a New England June that the poet is describing. **35. if it be in tune.** Syntax and meaning of this clause? What musical instrument has the poet in mind? **38. murmur . . . glisten.** Give illustrations of the 'murmur' and of the 'glisten.' **39. clod.** In what sense does it climb to a 'soul'? **45. startles,** starts up as if by magic. **46. buttercup.** Why the buttercup, rather than some other flower? **50. like a blossom.** Show in what respects this dainty comparison is true. **54. dumb breast.** Observe the beautiful allusion to the mother instinct in the bird. **56. nice.** Just what does the word mean here? **which song?** What do you think would be the poet's answer to his own question? Why?

57–79. 57–60. Now . . . bay. Discuss the figure, showing its aptness. **61. Now . . . it.** Explain. **70. dandelions.** What is the derivation of this word? **67–79. We . . . crowing.** These lines furnish a good example of what is called "indirect description." **77. bold chanticleer,** often referred to by Lowell. What is the force of the adjective?

80–95. 82. upward striving. What former lines illustrate this? **83–85. 'Tis . . . living.** What seems to be Lowell's conception of the influence of nature upon man? Compare with Wordsworth in *Tintern Abbey* (107–111). Which is the finer view? **86. Who knows,** and who cares? What is gained by the figure? **90. The . . . youth.** Explain. **91–93. And . . . snow.** Discuss this figure, and compare it with the two which have before brought out the same thought, ll. 57–60 and ll. 86–87. What are the differences, and which is the truer conception? Are our past sorrows really effaced or only covered over? **94–95. What . . . vow.** Observe that the organist has found the chord for which he has been groping; the poet has reached his theme, which he is to develop by means of the story of a dream. Note how these two lines effect a transition which allows the abrupt introduction to Part First.

91–108. What has been the versification of the prelude? What are the rhyme and metre of Part I? In which is there the more irregularity, and what seems to be the effect produced by the irregular lines? **99. Holy Grail:** see introduction to notes. **100–105.** This seeking for a vision before setting out on a quest was not uncommon among knights; but the zest with which the vision is sought marks certain traits of Sir Launfal. What are they? At what time of day does he go to sleep, and is it indoors or outside the castle? **105. Ere day . . . anew.** Discuss the figure. **107. like a cloud.** Show the points of comparison.

109–127. Discuss whether this stanza is (1) a part of Sir Launfal's dream; or (2) a part of his waking consciousness as he gradually falls asleep; or (3) merely a description by the poet, bridging the time from the going to

sleep to the beginning of the dream in Stanza III. **109–113. The crows . . . trees.** What time of day is this? **114–115. The castle . . . gray.** In what sense is the castle 'an outpost'? **116. North Countree.** Where may we suppose this to be? Observe the archaic form of 'country' as in the older ballads. What effect does this produce? **122–125. pavilions . . . tent.** What were they?

128–146. 131. **flamed so bright.** How does the poet show this brightness? 134. **siege.** What suggests the word, and where suggested before? 137. **locust-leaf.** What peculiarity of the locust leaf justifies this comparison? Note alliteration and its effect. 138. **unscarred,** because a 'maiden knight.' 140–146. Point out the contrasts in this stanza, and explain how the knight can be so fully in sympathy with the summer, and, at the same time, be the controlling spirit of the gloomy castle. In what is he lacking? 140. **hill and stream and tree.** This is a good instance of the poetic value of the specific and definite rather than the general. See note on *Horatius* (23).

147–158. Note the attitude of Sir Launfal toward the leper. He believes himself to be going on a great mission for the glory of God; all nature has seemed propitious; his heart is throbbing with his consciousness of the beauty of the morning and the grandeur of his quest, when suddenly this loathsome creature spoils it all (as it appears to him) by getting in the way. What evident misconception of the knight as to the real meaning of religion and the service of God? 147. **made morn.** Explain. 149. **sate**: see note on 'countree' (116). 154. **Like a frozen waterfall.** Show the force of this figure. 156. **dainty nature.** How do these words explain the character and action of Sir Launfal? 158. **So . . . scorn.** Why did he give him anything? Force of 'tossed'?

159–173. Discuss the reasons for the leper's reception of Sir Launfal's gift. 163. **which the hand can hold,** modifies what? Why is such not 'true alms'? 164–165. Is the leper right in condemning giving 'from a sense of duty'? 166. **mite.** A coin of exceedingly small value — less than a quarter of a cent. Look up allusion in *Mark* xii. 42. 167. **to that,** the preposition means partly, in recognition of that, and partly, because of that. 168–169. **That . . . unite.** What is this 'thread' which thus binds the whole world together? 170. **The hand . . . alms.** Why not? 171. **The heart . . . palms.** Explain. 172. **a god goes with it.** Meaning? **store,** abundance. 173. **starving,** for want of what? **in darkness,** of what kind?

174–210. Try to conceive a definite picture of this stanza — one in which each detail shall be consistent with the rest. How does a brook freeze, and what is the appearance of the under side of the ice? 174–180. **Down . . . bare.** Indicate the means by which the coldness of the wind is emphasized. 175. **summers.** Why is '*summers*' more suitable here than *winters*? 176. **wold,** here means a rolling, treeless stretch of country. 180. **unleafed.** Why is this better than *leafless*? 182. **him.** A personal pronoun used for a reflexive. So frequently in poetry. *Cf.* 'me' (162). 183. **white stars.** Why 'white'? 184. **groined his arches.** A groin is the angle formed by

the intersection of arches. What were the arches in this case? What the beams? What the crystal spars? **186. lashes . . . stars,** the little rays that edge the stars, and seem to dart out as they twinkle. **187. summer delight**: see ll. 205–210. **189–192. Sometimes . . . breeze.** Describe this little forest under the ice. What were the steel-stemmed trees? Why did they bend, and in what direction, *i.e.* up or down stream? What onomatopœia in these lines? **194. mosses.** Was this real moss or an ice formation? **195–196. Sometimes . . . leaf.** What and where was the carving? Why called 'arabesques'? Derivation and meaning of word? **202. a star.** These drops, on the 'nodding' bulrushes, were the stars for the fairy occupants of the winter palace. **204. winter-palace.** Ice-built palaces were constructed first in Russia; now frequently in Canada. **205–210. 'Twas . . . frost.** Discuss this beautiful picture. What might have been some of these images, or 'fleeting shadows'?

211–224. Explain the contrast between this stanza and the last. **212. cheeks of Christmas.** Is this a personification or a metonymy? **214. lightsome.** Does it mean the same here as in l. 137? **215–216. Through . . . tide.** Explain the figure. **217–218. The . . . wind.** Show how the flame resembles a flag. **219–220. Like . . . blind.** In what sense is the sap 'hunted to death,' what are its 'blind galleries,' and what makes the noise? **221–224. And . . . deer.** Show how the sparks, eddying with the draught through the loose soot in the chimney, are like deer, while the soot is like a forest.

225–239. **225–232. But . . . shelterless.** With what are these lines in contrast? Discuss the figure which they express, showing whether it is attractive, true, effective, and whether it adds to, or detracts from, the poem. **231. burden,** the theme of a musical composition. **232. shelterless.** What is the effect of the repetition? **233. seneschal.** His duties seem to be those of both warden and steward. **flared.** How can a voice be said to flare? **238. piers.** Describe these piers. In what direction do they slant? What is the 'drift' against which they were seen?

240–257. **241. rattled shudderingly.** Show effect of the onomatopœia, and force of the adverb. **243. For . . . spun.** Explain the figure. **244–245. A single . . . sun.** Contrast with ll. 111–112. Why 'cold' sun? **250. hard gate.** Explain the epithet. **251. sate**: see note on l. 116. **252. man.** Syntax? **255. No more . . . cross.** Show the significance of the fact that the cross is no longer ostentatiously displayed. What lesson has Sir Launfal learned? **256. sign,** *i.e.* of the cross. In what sense was it 'the badge of the suffering and the poor'?

258–272. **259. Was . . . air.** Explain the figure. **261. sunnier clime,** perhaps in the Holy Land or near it. Observe the comfort and pleasure that Sir Launfal derives from these imaginings, yet how willingly he turns toward the grewsome leper. **265. black and small.** Syntax? **269–272. To where . . . palms.** Show points of appropriateness in the figure.

273–287. **273. For . . . alms.** What is the effectiveness of this sudden

interruption? Observe the rhyme, and explain how this adds to the effect of suddenness. **274. may,** as far as Sir Launfal cares. **275–279. But . . . disease.** Show how it suits the poet's purpose to make the leper horrible. **278–279.** Significance of the simile? **280. And.** The force here of this conjunction? Why was *but* not used? **280–285. I behold . . . side:** see *Matthew* xxvii. 29, *Mark* xv. 17, and *John* xx. 25, 27. What points of resemblance does Sir Launfal see between the leper and Christ? **281. tree,** cross. **287. Behold . . . Thee:** see *Matthew* xxv. 40.

288–301. **291. flung an alms.** Force of 'flung'? **leprosie.** What distinction is there between giving to the *leper* and giving to '*leprosie*'? **294. ashes and dust.** What do these symbolize? *Cf.* the phrase "sackcloth and ashes." **295–297. He . . . drink.** Compare his present with his former action. Why does the poet not make Sir Launfal give *all* his crust to the leper? **300. Yet . . . fed.** Explain. **301. with his thirsty soul.** Why is he said to have drunk with his soul? *Cf.* l. 173.

302–327. **302. mused.** On what was Sir Launfal musing, and why with 'downcast face'? **303. A light,** coming from the transfigured leper, who now proves to be the Christ. **307. Beautiful Gate:** see *Acts* iii. 2. **308. Himself the Gate:** see *John* x. 9. What does this metaphor mean, and what is meant by 'the temple of God in Man'? **310–313. His words . . . upon.** Which of the two similes is the more expressive of softness? of healing power? **314. calmer than silence.** Can there be anything 'calmer than silence'? What is the rhetorical figure? See INTRODUCTION. **318. it is here — this cup.** What has made of this wooden cup a holy grail? What is significant in the fact that it was in Sir Launfal's possession all the while, and was found at the gate of his own castle rather than in distant climes? Show how this discovery reverts to the "first chord" of the poem, ll. 9–12. **320–322. This crust . . . indeed:** see *Matthew* xxvi. 28. Note that Sir Launfal has *more* than found the Grail; that he is actually partaking in a holy supper. What is now shown to be the true Holy Grail, and where may it be found? **324–325. Not what . . . bare.** Do these words condemn what we ordinarily term "charity"? What shall we say of the man who contributes for the help of those with whom he never comes into contact? Of the man whose wealth is so great that he gives without making any self-sacrifice? Is *sharing* a necessary condition of true charity? **326. feeds three.** Explain how the giver feeds Christ and himself as well as the recipient.

328–347. The vision of Sir Launfal is now ended. The quest is proved unnecessary, for the true Grail has been discovered. Discuss the change which this discovery must have brought into the life and ideals of the knight. **328. swound:** *cf. Ancient Mariner* (62). **332. stronger mail.** What is meant? **334–336. The castle . . . bough.** Discuss the figure. **336. hang-bird,** the Baltimore oriole. See *Dict.* under both hangbird and Baltimore oriole. **338–343. The Summer's . . . round:** see ll. 119–127. Describe and account for the change. **346–347. And there's . . . he.** In what sense is this true? What lessons can you suggest which Sir Launfal may have learned

from his vision? Which lines in the poem seem to you most poetic, and why? (See INTRODUCTION, pp. ciii–cxi.)

IDYLLS OF THE KING

The history of the legends which form the substance of the *Idylls of the King* has already been traced in the text introducing the poems of chivalry. Lack of space prevents the inclusion of more than three of the *Idylls* in this book. The four following general notes will, we trust, clear up for the student most of the difficulties he will encounter.

[Note I.] *The Coming of Arthur*

In this introductory *Idyll* we meet the great king just after he has placed himself upon the throne and founded his new order of knighthood. He has been summoned by a neighboring ruler, Leodogran, the king of Cameliard, to help defend that suffering country against the ravages of the "beast" and the incursions of the Saxon hordes. King Arthur responds to the appeal, slays the "wild dog, and wolf, and boar, and bear," drives off the heathen invaders, and falls in love with Guinevere, "fairest of all flesh on earth," the daughter of the king. Returning to his own land he finds the country in tumult; for the "barons of his realm, colleaguing with a score of petty kings," have risen in rebellion against him. With the aid of Sir Lancelot, however, his best loved and most highly honored knight, he completely overthrows the rebels — among them Lot, the husband of Arthur's reputed half-sister, Bellicent. Having thus overcome his foes, Arthur quickly sends "the bold Sir Bedivere, first made of all his knights," to King Leodogran —

> "Saying, 'If I in aught have served thee well,
> Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife.'"[1]

Before giving answer to the suit, Leodogran seeks to learn the secret of Arthur's birth, for some there were who denied his right to the title of a king. Sir Bedivere tells the commonly accepted story of Arthur's parentage, — that he is the son of King Uther and his "winsome wife Ygerne," and half-brother of —

> "Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,"

who —

> "Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
> To Arthur."

Still the old king hesitates. But happily Queen Bellicent herself comes on a visit to Cameliard, bringing with her two of her sons, the light-hearted and sunny-tempered, though irresponsible and somewhat selfish Gawain, and the sullen, suspicious, evil-hearted Modred. In his perplexity Leodogran asks her to reveal what she knows of this suitor for his daughter's hand. Bellicent, responding, describes the impressive scene when Arthur ascended the throne,

[1] All the passages quoted in Note I are from *The Coming of Arthur*.

bound his knights to himself by solemn vows of fealty, and so founded the Order of the Table Round. She tells how the coronation ceremonies were graced by the old mage Merlin; how they were glorified by the Lady of the Lake (the symbol of Religion or the Church), who "dwells down in the deep," —

> "Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful;"

how near the new-crowned King there stood "three fair queens" (thought to symbolize some such virtues as Faith, Hope, and Charity), —

> "Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
> Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
> Sweet faces, who will help him at his need."

She relates how there was borne before the King the magic sword Excalibur, the sword —

> "That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
> And Arthur row'd across and took it — rich
> With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
> Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so bright
> That men are blinded by it — on one side,
> Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
> 'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye shall see,
> And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
> 'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
> Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
> 'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
> Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the King
> Took, and by this will beat his foemen down."

So far Leodogran is partly reassured. Yet he questions still further. Bellicent is "dark in hair and eyes"; but Arthur is "fair" with "blue eyes," and "light and lustrous curls." How, then, can he be her brother? And now it is that the Queen confides to King Leodogran a secret known to no other mortal than herself and Merlin, the aged wizard of King Uther's court. But first she motions to her boys to pass out of the room, —

> "And Gawain went, and breaking into song
> Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
> Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw;
> But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
> And there half-heard — the same that afterward
> Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom."

Her sons withdrawn, Queen Bellicent tells her secret to the king: how she had been brought up with Arthur and had regarded him as her brother; but how in later days there had been imparted to her the mystery of Arthur's coming into the world. For on the night when King Uther lay on his death-

bed, "moaning and wailing for an heir," Merlin, worn out with attending his dying master, —

> "Left the still king, and passing forth to breathe,"

walked by the shore and —

> "watched the great sea fall
> Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
> Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
> And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
> Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:
> And down the wave and in the flame was borne
> A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,
> Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried, 'The King!
> Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe
> Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
> Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
> And all at once all round him rose in fire,
> So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
> And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
> Free sky and stars: And this same child,
> Is he who reigns."

She had sought to learn more from Merlin, the Queen continues, but —

> "He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
> In riddling triplets of old time, and said: —
>
> "'Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:
> Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
> From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'"

Thus it came about that old King Leodogran, at last satisfied, and strengthened in his determination by a certain wondrous dream, sends the bold Sir Bedivere —

> "Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.
>
> "Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved
> And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth
> And bring the Queen, and watch'd him from the gates;
> And Lancelot past away among the flowers —
> For then was latter April — and return'd
> Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.
> To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,
> Chief of the church in Britain, and before
> The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King
> That morn was married; while in stainless white,
> The fair beginners of a nobler time,
> And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
> Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy."

This, then, is the story of "the coming" and the marriage of Arthur. Great, good, noble-hearted, he realizes his mighty mission in the world. He knows that Merlin has said: —

> "Tho' man may wound him that he will not die,
> But pass, again to come; and then or now
> Utterly smite the heathen under foot,
> Till these and all men hail him for their King."

He sets himself to found a kingdom in accord with his high ideals. Thus far the Romans and the heathen hordes have more than once menaced his new realm, but his heart has told him that —

> "The old order changeth, yielding place to new.
>
> "And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
> Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King
> Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
> Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame
> The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd."

[Note II.] *Persons and Places of the Idylls*

In Note I, the story of *The Coming of Arthur*, we have already called attention to: —

1. **King Arthur,**
2. **Queen Guinevere,**
3. **King Lot of Orkney,**
4. **Queen Bellicent,**
5. **Sir Gawain,**
6. **Sir Modred,**
7. **Sir Lancelot,**
8. **Sir Bedivere,**
9. **King Uther,** Arthur's predecessor,
10. **Merlin,** the magician,
11. **The Lady of the Lake,**
12. **The three fair queens,**
13. **King Leodogran.**

The following is a list of additional names, some knowledge of which is necessary to the understanding of the three *Idylls* included in the text.

1. **Pendragon,** "the dragon's head," a name for Uther, who was accustomed to carry with him a golden dragon to his wars. The name afterward descended to Arthur, the reputed son of Uther. The symbol was suggested by a dragon-like appearance in the heavens, seen at the death of the former king, Aurelius, brother of Uther.

2. **Aurelius Emrys.** Brother and predecessor of Uther on the throne of Britain. He is said to have been poisoned by a Saxon.

3. **King Mark of Cornwall.** Next to Modred the most evil character of the *Idylls*. Among other deeds of which he was guilty was the treacherous murder of his nephew, Sir Tristram.

4. **Sir Tristram.** A noble knight, son of Mark's sister. In the *Idylls* he is called Mark's "cousin," but that word is used in its general sense of *kinsman*. Through the power of a magic potion Tristram was made to fall in love with Mark's wife, Iseult.

5. **Sir Kay.** The seneschal or steward of Arthur's hall. In a sense he is

the comic character of the poem, always overbearing and officious, and always in trouble. He was the foster-brother of Arthur, who loved him despite his faults.

6. **Sir Geraint.** A brave and noble knight, ever loyal to Arthur, and, finally, killed in his service. He was the husband of Enid, and is the chief character in two of the most charming of the *Idylls*.

7. **Sir Galahad.** A celebrated knight, called "the chaste," who achieved the quest of the Holy Grail. His pure and unselfish nature made him the ideal of chivalry as well as an exemplar of religion.

8. **Sir Percivale.** The first of Arthur's knights to learn the story of the Grail. He is the speaker and principal character in the Idyll of the *Holy Grail*. At last forced to abandon his quest of the Grail, for which by nature he was all unfit, he leaves knighthood and enters upon a monastic life.

9. **Sir Gareth.** Son of Lot and Bellicent, and brother of Gawain and Modred, yet of much finer character than these two knights. He was tall and gracious of form. From his large and shapely hands he derived the name of "Beaumains," or "Fair Hands."

The following are the most important places mentioned in our three *Idylls*.

1. **Lyonnesse.** A fabulous country, formerly adjacent to Cornwall, though it has long since disappeared, and is said to be now hundreds of feet under water.

2. **Camelot.** This city of Arthur's court has been variously located. Tennyson has left the following account: "On the latest limit of the West, in the land of Lyonnesse, where, save the rocky isles of Scilly, all is now wild sea, rose the sacred Mount of Camelot. It rose from the deeps with gardens and bowers and palaces, and at the top of the mount was King Arthur's hall, and the holy minster with the cross of gold. The mount was the most beautiful in the world, sometimes green and fresh in the beam of morning, sometimes all one splendor, folded in the golden mists of the West. But all underneath was hollow, and the mountain trembled, when all the seas rushed bellowing through the porphyry caves; and there ran a prophecy that the mountain and the city on some wild morning would tumble into the abyss and be no more."

3. **Avilion.** A mythical Isle of the Blessed famed in Celtic story, situated far in the western ocean. In this terrestrial paradise Arthur and other Celtic heroes are supposed to live forever.

4. **Caerleon.** On the river Usk in Wales, one of the most important residences of Arthur and his court.

5. **Caerlyle.** Carlisle in Cumberland, which like Caerleon was frequently the scene of knightly tournaments.

6. **Caer Eryri.** The summit of Snowdon, the highest peak in Britain.

7. **Almesbury.** A convent of the Benedictine nuns, situated in Wiltshire, not far from Salisbury. Thither Guinevere withdrew when her guilty love for Lancelot had been discovered by the king.

8. **Badon hill.** Probably Badbury Hill in Dorsetshire; the battlefield on which the Britons under Arthur are said to have checked for a time the advance of the West Saxons (about 520 A.D.).

9. **Battlefields of Arthur.** The "twelve great battles" (see end of Note

I) in which Arthur overthrew the heathen were, in order of occurrence, at the following places: 1. *Glem* (Lincolnshire or Northumberland); 2, 3, 4, 5. *Duglas* (a small stream in Britain); 6. *Bassa* (a rock in the Firth of Forth); 7. *Celidon* (the Caledonian forest); 8. *Gurnion Castle* (in Norfolk); 9. *Legion* (the city of Exeter); 10. *Trath Treroit* (a river in Lancashire); 11. *Breguoin* (a mountain in Northern England); 12. *Badon* (the place of final victory. See note 8 above).

10. **Astolat.** The home of Elaine. Supposed to be at Guilford in Surrey.

11. **Castle Perilous.** The fanciful name given to the home of Lyonors and Lynette.

12. **Gelt.** A river in Cumberland, on the cliffs above which are certain inscriptions supposed to have been made by a Roman "vexillary" or standard bearer.

[Note III.] *Time Occupied by the Idylls*

Modified from Maccallum's *Tennyson's Idylls and Arthurian Story.*

The reign of Arthur may be supposed to have lasted twelve years. The order of its events is recorded in the *Idylls* as follows: —

	Idyll.	Chief Events.
1st Year.	I. *The Coming of Arthur.*	Coronation. Founding of Round Table. Crushing of Rebellion. Marriage to Guinevere. Wars with the Heathen and with Rome.
2d Year.	—	First of the Diamond Tournaments.
3d Year.	—	—
4th Year.	—	—
5th Year.	II. 1. *Gareth and Lynette* (?).	Adventures of Gareth. Tristram knighted.
6th Year.	2. *Marriage of Geraint* (?).	Adventures of Geraint.
7th Year.	3. *Geraint and Enid* (?).	"Geraint in the waste land."
8th Year.	4. *Balin and Balan* (?).	Love between Lancelot and Guinevere becomes guilty.
9th Year.	5. *Merlin and Vivien* (?)	Betrayal of Merlin by Vivien. (See note, *Eve of St. Agnes*, 171.)
10th Year.	6. *Lancelot and Elaine.*	Last of the Diamond Tournaments.
11th Year.	7. *The Holy Grail.*	Quest of the Grail.
12th Year.	8. *Pelleas and Ettarre.*	Discovery by Arthur of the Queen's unfaithfulness. Tristram slain by Mark.
	9. *The Last Tournament.*	
	(An interval of several weeks).	
	10. *Guinevere.*	Last interview between Arthur and the Queen.
	III. *The Passing of Arthur.*	Arthur's march, last battle, and passing.

[Note IV.] *Poetical Nature and Form of the Idylls*

There has been much discussion among critics as to whether the *Idylls of the King* may properly be considered an epic. It is certainly true that this production is not an epic in the sense in which the term is applied to the *Iliad*, or the *Æneid*, or *Paradise Lost*, — poems characterized by continuity of narrative and unity of action. In a certain sense, though carrying out and developing a central theme, Tennyson's *Idylls* form not one poem, but twelve. As a whole, the production has epical quality, and may be characterized as an episodical or idyllic epic. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. xciv, ci.)

The metrical form of the *Idylls* is blank verse, — a blank verse finer than anything of its kind since Milton. The lines are not arbitrarily or mechanically formed. With the instinct of a true artist the poet constantly varies the cadence to suit the theme in hand. It will prove an extremely profitable study to examine the metre of many lines and paragraphs, to note the pauses, the substitutions of feet, the sequence of tones, and the harmonic relation between sound and sense. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. lviii, lxxvi.)

GARETH AND LYNETTE

1–177. 1. Lot and Bellicent: see Note I.[1] **2. Gareth**: see Note II.[1] **3. spate**, a noun of Celtic origin, meaning a river flood. **14. whistled to.** From what is the metaphor drawn? **18. yield**, bless or reward. **20. discaged**: see l. 14. **25, 26. Gawain, Modred**: see Note I. **37. an**, if. See ll. 40, 50, 98. **46. Book of Hours**, a prayer-book containing prayers prescribed for various hours, and richly adorned or "illuminated" with borders, initial letters, or miniature pictures in colors and gold. One of these illustrations, in this case, was a palm-tree. **47. haunting**, in its original meaning of frequenting or lingering. **51. leash**, used in general for the number *three*. This use arose from the custom of leading three greyhounds by a leash, or thong, of leather. **56. clomb**. Archaic for climbed. **66. brand Excalibur**: see Note I. **70. him**, the 'lusty youth' with longing for the egg of steel, — the quest of high adventure. **75, 76. traitor to the King, barons' war**: see Note I. **85. jousts.** A joust is a tilting match between knights on horseback. **87. often**, frequent. **88. falls**, as the knights are thrown from their horses in tournament. **90. burns**: see note on *Comus* (313). **94. my prone year**, my declining years. **104. But**, only. **122. frequent**, associated. **128. cloud . . . birth**: see Note I. **131. yield me**, let me go; give in to my wishes. **133–135. who swept . . . free**: see Note I. **151. knaves**, in the original meaning of servant or boy. *Cf.* Ger. *knabe*. **152. bar**, a railing between kitchen and dining hall. **157. villain**, degrading, such as would suit those who are base-born. A villain was originally a feudal tenant of the lowest class (from Lat. *villa*, a farm). **162. thrall**, a slave or bondman. **172. Perplext his outward purpose.** His mother's wistful tenderness rendered difficult his plan of going away ('outward purpose'). **176. still**, constantly

[1] The reference is to the "general notes" preceding.

178–294. 185. **Camelot**: see Note II. 200. **changeling**, a child exchanged by fairies, a fairy child having been substituted for the human babe. 202. **Merlin's glamour**: see Note I. 210–211. **lined and rippled**, from the carving on the keystone of the gateway's arch. 212. **Lady of the Lake**: see Note I. 219. **sacred fish**, an emblem adopted by the early church as a sacred symbol, because ΙΧΘΥΣ, the Greek for 'fish,' is composed of the initial letters of the Greek words for Jesus, Christ, God, Son, Saviour. 225–226. **three queens . . . need**: see Note I. 229. **dragon-boughts**, coils of a dragon's tail. 236. **an ancient man**, Merlin. See l. 202. 248. **playing on him.** The seer answers mockingly, as a rejoinder to Gareth's untruth of l. 238. 249–251. **I have seen . . . air**, a mirage. See *Dict.* 256. **sacred mountain-cleft**, Parnassus. See *Cl. M.*, p. 442. The fairy kings and queens thus journeying from Parnassus have been interpreted as "the old mythologies whose birthplace was in the East." For the whole of the ingenious explanation of this passage, see Littledale's *Essays on Tennyson's Idylls of the King*, pp. 88–89. 258. **And built . . . harps.** See the similar story of Thebes and Troy in *Cl. M.*, pp. 102, 136, 189. 271–274. **like enow . . . for ever.** "The city may represent the state of spiritual and moral culture in the world during any epoch. Every generation has to build its own spiritual city for itself — the music has to be kept up." (Littledale.) 275. **reverence . . . beard.** Do not disgrace your old age by such falsehoods. The boy has no conception of the sage's meaning. 280. **Riddling of the Bards.** See a similar 'Riddling' in Note I. 293. **she nor I.** As Littledale remarks, "Gareth's grammar becomes here a little confused." What is the syntax of these pronouns?

294–430. 298. **did their days**, left memorials of their deeds. 314. **doom**, judgments. 327. **Uther**: see Notes I and II. 345. **barons' war**: see Note I. 348. **I held with these**, took the side of the barons. 350. **Thrall'd**, imprisoned. 355. **wreak**, as in the phrase "to wreak vengeance." 359. **Sir Kay**: see Note II. 362. **gyve and gag.** In old times scolding women were sometimes gagged by an iron muzzle fastened on their heads, and sent in fetters to the ducking-stool. 367. **Aurelius Emrys**: see Note II. 376. **Mark**: see Note II. 380. **charlock**, wild mustard. 386. **cousin Tristram**: see Note II. 387. **for himself . . . state**, since he (Mark) was of higher rank. 397. **pile**, a structure built into the hall upon which the shields of the knights were hung. 398. **blazon'd**, each having the knight's coat of arms painted upon it. 411. **reave**, despoil. 419. **churl**, peasant. 422. **lap . . . lead.** Sheet lead was in early times used for winding around corpses.

431–572. So far the *Idyll* has been almost entirely original with the poet; but from now on the story follows very closely that of Malory in his *Morte Darthur*. 434. **ashamed.** Why was Gareth ashamed? 442. **thine**, *i.e.* thy master. 444–445. **as the plant . . . lichen.** The lichen is here supposed to be a plant deadly to those other plants on which it fastens itself. 447. **brewis**, broth, or bread soaked in broth. 451. **Lancelot**: see Note I. 454. **fluent**, in its original sense of *flowing*. 465. **Sir Fair-hands**: see

Note II. **476. broach,** probably of Celtic origin, — a spit to hold the meat for roasting. **489. tarns,** small mountain lakes. **490. Caer-Eryri:** see Note II. **492. Isle Avilion:** see Note II, and *Passing of Arthur* (427–432). **519. Between . . . moon,** *i.e.* at the time of full moon. **524. ragged oval,** as a rough boundary for their tournament field. **528. I leap . . . knee.** Show what Gareth means. **540. thine,** *thy* wish. **547. demand,** *i.e.* inquiry of Sir Kay, "him whom ye gave," etc. **559. my knighthood do the deed.** A true knight does not seek personal glory. **571. lions,** the emblems on Lancelot's shield. See l. 1186; also *Lantelot and Elaine* (659).

573–741. 580. **foe within.** What, according to Lynette, is the condition of Arthur's land? **586. best blood,** sacramental wine. **607. or a holy life,** or become a nun. **614. that old knight errantry.** Arthur's knighthood is of a different kind from the sort ridiculed by Cervantes in his *Don Quixote.* **638. brought . . . brow.** Why was Arthur displeased? **646. lane of access,** the passageway between the two rows of knights. **657. one,** *i.e.* one entry; not the one through which the king was accustomed to pass. **665. maiden shield, casque.** What are these? **669. like . . . fire.** Explain the simile. **670–673. flashed . . . fly,** as some varieties of the beetle family, whose outer or protecting wing is dull, but whose inner wing is of a brilliant hue. Compare with the previous simile. **688. being named,** *i.e.* being called by his owner before he is ready to quit the fight. **693. hath past his time,** is in his dotage; his brain must be turned from an old blow in the head. **711. that did never he,** *i.e.* he (Gareth) never went 'against the king' (710). **717–718. Then . . . gate:** *cf.* ll. 684–685. **729. foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,** a foul-smelling mushroom in the wood. **731. shrew,** a small insect-eating animal. **740. slipt,** dislocated.

742–882. 742. **shingle,** gravel. **749. unhappiness,** mischance. **751. loon:** see note *Ancient Mariner* (11). **766. beknaved,** called knave. **771. spit.** Why does Lynette call Gareth's sword a 'spit'? **778. mere,** a pool or lake. Discuss the simile in the following line. **791. haling,** dragging. **800. wreak'd:** *cf.* l. 355. **828. cate:** see *Eve of St. Agnes* (173) and note. **829. peacock.** In days of chivalry, peacocks were served at table only on state occasions. Littledale quotes from Stanley, respecting this dish: "Before it, when roasted and dressed in its plumage, and placed with great pomp and ceremony, as the top dish, at the most splendid feasts, all the guests, male and female, took a solemn vow; the knights vowing bravery, and the ladies engaging to be loving and faithful." Lynette seems to stand somewhat in need of such a vow. **839. frontless,** brazen. **862. Thy pardon . . . avail.** Excuse this advice: I but speak for your own good. **870. allow,** put up with. **871. stoat,** a kind of brown weasel. **isled,** taken refuge, as on the same small island. **873. ruth,** pity. **881–882. as . . . son,** a reference to the story of Cinderella.

883–998. Those who desire to read an allegory into this delightful tale of Gareth's contests with the knights of the winding river, may be interested in the following suggestion by Mr. Elsdale, quoted by Littledale: "The serpent

river is the stream of time. Its three long loops, the three ages of life — youth, middle age, old age. The guardians of the crossings are the personified forms of the temptations suited to these different ages." 889. **Lent-lily,** the daffodil, blossoming about the time of Lent. Its color is bright yellow. 900. **knave,** here seemingly used in its present sense of *rascal.* 908. **Avanturine,** a kind of quartz, glistening with scales of mica. 926. **that,** such a. 934. **lightly,** quickly. 939. **central bridge,** as in the Latin phrase *summus mons.* 950. **so,** if. 970. **she sang.** Why does Lynette sing, and what is the meaning of her song? 972. **thou,** turning from her song to address Gareth. 979. **fool's parable,** *cf.* ll. 618–620, 1169. 990. **worry,** torment or fret. 996. **worship,** honor or respect.

999–1059. 1002. **the flower,** the golden dandelion. 1008. **brother.** Why does the Sun mistake Gareth for his brother? **marches,** boundaries. 1012. **vizoring,** covering with the vizor of his helmet. 1013. **cipher,** vacant, expressionless. 1033. **unhappiness:** see note on l. 749. 1036. **twice . . . on me.** What does Lynette mean by this second song? What is her present attitude toward Gareth? Observe that she is visiting on Gareth her disgust at herself for becoming interested in a 'kitchen knave.' 1038. **so:** see note on l. 950. 1048. **rosemaries.** It is the sweet-smelling rosemary and bay leaves that garnish the boar's head — not flowers. You know nothing of flowers. 1052. **mavis; merle:** see *Dict.*

1060–1162. 1060. **treble bow,** three spans or arches. 1067. **hardened skins,** possibly typifying the unalterable habits of a lifetime. See ll. 1100–1104. 1072. **Thy ward,** the part of the stream you should defend. For whom does the Evening-star mistake Gareth, and why? 1075. **disaster.** Show force of word here by looking up derivation. 1094. **drawn,** with drawn sword. 1109. **prophesied,** in l. 1077. 1118. **buoy.** Of what verb is this the object? 1130. **trefoil,** clover (from Lat. *tres* + *folium,* a leaf). 1141. **mazed.** The fact that you are only a knave after all, has bewildered me. When does Lynette find out the truth about Gareth? 1144. **handle,** have aught to do with. 1155. **hern:** see *Dict.*

1163–1312. 1163. **comb** (combe), probably of Celtic origin; the head of a valley, surrounded by steep cliffs. 1172; 1173. **vexillary; Gelt:** see Note II. 1174–1175. **Phosphorus . . . Mors,** *Morning Star, Midday, Evening Star, Night, Death,* — the inscriptions which the hermit (1166) has carved upon the cliff. 1177. **running down the Soul.** What is the significance of the fleeing Soul, pursued by the five emblems of Time? 1195. **jarr'd.** Why does his laughter jar upon Lynette? 1205. **Out sword,** for a hand-to-hand fight. 1211–1213. **An . . . down.** If some mischance, which would have proved false the boast of his brother-knights, had overthrown Lancelot — but that, of course, could never have happened, etc. 1224. **knight, knave, prince, and fool.** What is Lynette's mood, and why does she call Gareth this? 1264–1265. **so . . . accomplishment.** What is Lynette aiming at? Does she wish to spare Gareth from this threatened danger, or to secure for him the chance of rounding out his victories? 1281. **Arthur's harp,** a con-

stellation of three stars forming a harp-shaped triangle, and situated near the Great Bear. **1311. he,** Lancelot.

1313–1394. 1313–1314. **urged . . . devisings,** instructed him in the fine points of an encounter. 1318. **Instant,** earnest. 1330. **marge,** horizon. 1348. **fleshless laughter,** a grinning skull. See l. 624. 1364. **him.** To whom does this refer? 1386. **Then . . . underground.** Mr. Elsdale says, in his *Studies in the Idylls*, "Death, though apparently the most formidable antagonist of all, turns out to be no real foe, and his fall ushers in 'the happier day from underground.'" But what, in this interpretation, can be meant by 'underground'? 1392. **he,** Malory in his *Morte Darthur*. 1394. **he,** Tennyson in his *Idyll*.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

1–157. 2. **Astolat**: see Note II (*Persons and Places of the Idylls*). 4. **sacred shield.** The *Idyll* opens in the middle of the action. Lancelot has left his famous shield in care of the 'lily maid,' and she is guarding it as a sacred trust. This story of Elaine, in her world of dreams and fancies, should be compared with that of the *Lady of Shalott* — Tennyson's first version of this theme. 10. **their own tinct,** the *tint* or color of the blazonings. See note on *Gareth and Lynette* (398). **of her wit,** according to her own fancy. 22, 23. **Caerlyle, Caerleon, Camelot**: see Note II. 31. **diamond jousts**: see Note III for time of these jousts. 35. **Lyonesse**: see Note II. 36. **tarn**: see *Gareth and Lynette* (489). 46. **aside,** on each side. 50. **nape,** of the neck. 53. **shingly**: see note on *Gareth and Lynette* (742). **scaur,** a precipitous bank or rock. 69. **queen,** Guinevere, with whom Lancelot was secretly in love. 76. **this world's hugest.** It is not certain which of Arthur's courts was near London. 91. **tale**: see note on *L'Allegro* (67). 94. **lets,** keeps. 118. **devoir,** devotion. 125. **untruth,** her unfaithfulness to her husband. 134. **The low sun makes the color.** Explain this metaphor and show how it applies to a Lancelot rather than to an Arthur.

158–396. 162. **downs,** tracts of sandy rolling land near the sea. 171. **wordless man.** This character is original with Tennyson. 177–179. **Some . . . them.** Note the naturalness of the picture. 188. **What . . . shield.** His shield, which he has thoughtlessly brought, is known. 201. **Allow him,** excuse his seeming rudeness. 246. **Had marr'd his face.** In what way may we imagine Lancelot's sin to have left its mark upon him? 252. **living soul,** with conscience active. 263. **smaller time,** such as the present day. 269. **glanc'd at,** alluded to. 279. **Badon hill**: see Note II. 287. **Glem.** For this and the proper names of the lines following, see *Battlefields of Arthur*, Note II. 293. **cuirass,** a leather breastplate upon which Arthur had borne in this battle an image of the Virgin Mary. 295. **lighten'd,** flashed. 297. **white Horse,** the emblem of the Saxons. 338. **rathe**: see note on *Lycidas* (142). 366. **who know,** *i.e.* who know this custom of Lancelot. 382. **twice.** What were they? 396. **so lived in fantasy**: see l. 27.

397–522. 406–407. **The green light . . . roofs.** The green light from

the meadows below were reflected on the chalky ceiling of the cave. **411. broke from underground**: see *Gareth and Lynette* (1386). **422. Pendragon**: see Note II. The boy is realizing his life's dream. He has seen 'one' — Lancelot; he expects, in the tournament, to see the 'other' — Arthur, of mysterious birth. **429. like a rainbow.** What gave the 'peopled gallery' this appearance? **434–440. And from . . . work.** Describe this carving, and explain 'ease' and 'tender.' **442. nameless King**: see l. 45. **446. crescent,** in its radical sense from Lat. *crescere*, to increase; hence growing, as in strength and valor. **447. overcome,** overtop. **450. the man,** Arthur. **453. held the lists,** received the attack. **480. bare,** bore. Notice the force of the simile which follows. **507. poplar grove,** near the hermit's cave. See l. 409.

523–739. **535. Gawain**: see Note I. **547. carven flower**: see ll. 441–442. **554–555. Tristram, Geraint, Gareth**: see Note II. **555. therewithal,** nevertheless. **583–585. Our . . . glory**: see ll. 151–153. But who spoke these words? **595. this,** *i.e.* this is ill news. **653. hern**: see *Gareth and Lynette* (1155). **707, 713. courtesy, obedience.** Gawain, the courteous and easy-going, has angered the King. In Arthur's mind 'obedience' and not 'courtesy' is the one true law. **715. strokes of the blood,** heart beats. **728. Marr'd . . . aim,** disconcerted the 'old dame.'

740–981. **771. I mean nothing.** What *does* he mean? **800. casque**: see *Gareth and Lynette* (665). **844. twilight,** half light; thus referring to morning as well as to evening. **857. simples,** medicinal herbs. *Cf. Comus* (627). **870. straiten'd,** restricted, held fast. **877. one face,** of the queen. **883. rough sickness**: *cf.* ll. 846–850. **898. burthen,** as in the phrase "the burden of a song." **923. that . . . yours.** It is due to you that I am alive to hear your request. **953. realm beyond the seas.** Malory says in his *Morte Darthur*: "But to say the sooth, Sir Lancelot and his nephews were lords of all France, and of all the lands that longed unto France." **969. against me,** against my nature. **977. tact,** sense or feeling.

982–1154. **995. sallow-rifted.** Explain. **997. a little song.** The songs in Tennyson's narratives (some of them among his best lyrics) always exquisitely suggest the mood of the story. Compare the songs in *Gareth and Lynette* and in the *Princess*. **1015. Phantom of the house.** The voice of the half-crazed girl, heard at 'the blood-red light of dawn,' is mistaken by the brothers for the "banshee" of the house, — a supernatural being supposed to warn a family of the approaching death of one of its members, by wailing or singing, in a mournful voice, under the windows. **1068. Seeing . . . fault**: see note on *Lady of Shalott* (77). **1092. ghostly man,** priest.

1155–1418. **1158. hard, hardly.** Distinguish between these words. **1168. vibrate,** betraying her secret agitation. **1170. oriel,** a sort of bay window. **summer side,** the side most exposed to the sun; *i.e.* the south. **1178. cygnet.** The cygnet, or young swan, is not white, as is the full-grown bird. **1206. your own,** *i.e.* your own worth. **1229. Diamonds to meet them.** Were these reflections in the water, or drops of water splashing up?

1253. girt, surrounded. **1256, 1257. Sir Percivale, Sir Galahad:** see Note II. **1259–1261. Then came . . . her:** see ll. 1047–1052. **1260. mused,** as in the *Lady of Shalott* (168). **1265. sometime,** once. **1299. Sea was her wrath.** Explain the metaphor. **1316. worship,** credit or honor. **1319. shrine.** Could this be Westminster Abbey, as some critics have suggested? **1346. affiance,** confidence. **1354. homeless,** lonely. **1368. Could bind,** if mere deserving could compel love. **1386. 'Jealousy in love?'** see l. 1340. **1393. Lady of the Lake:** see Note I. **1399. king's son.** Lancelot was the son of Ban, a Celtic king who had aided Arthur in his early wars. **1415. forgotten mere:** see l. 1400. **1418. holy man.** After Arthur's death, Lancelot sought the queen, who had withdrawn to the convent at Almesbury. The repentant Guinevere made him promise to leave her forever; and this he did, retiring to the hermitage "where dwelt the Bishop of Canterbury and the knight, Sir Bedivere." In the words of Malory, Book XVI, ch. v: "God knoweth his thought and his unstableness; and yet shall he die right an holy man."

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

1–169. The greater part of this poem was published in 1842, under the title of *Morte d'Arthur*. To this early version were afterwards prefixed one hundred and sixty-nine lines, and to the end were added twenty-nine. Thus we have the *Idyll* in its present form, — published as *The Passing of Arthur* in 1869. **1. Sir Bedivere:** see Note I (on the story of *The Coming of Arthur*). **6. their march.** Arthur is marching westward to attack the traitor Modred, who has leagued himself against the King, with many of Arthur's former knights, and with 'the heathen of the Northern Sea.' **9. Him,** God. Explain Arthur's mood of hopelessness, despair, almost of doubt. **18. Or else.** In what ways does Arthur try to account for God's apparent desertion of him? **26. reels back into the beast,** lapsing into the barbarism from which he had raised it. **28. Nay . . . die:** see Note I. **30. Gawain:** see Note I. **31. Lancelot's war.** After the discovery of Lancelot's treachery, the King made war against him. Gawain, aiding Arthur, received a mortal wound at the hands of Lancelot. **35. isle of rest:** see Avilion, in Note II. **56. Light was Gawain in life.** For Sir Gawain's character, see Note I, and *Lancelot and Elaine*, l. 557, and following. **59. Modred:** see Note I, and note to l. 6, above. **68–69. And brake . . . wall:** see Note I. **77. One . . . Almesbury:** see Note II. The reference is to Guinevere, —

> "And while she grovell'd at his feet,
> She felt the King's breath wander o'er her neck,
> And in the darkness o'er her fallen head
> Perceived the waving of his hands that blest."
> *Guinevere* (577–580).

81. Lyonesse: see Note II. **90–91. that day . . . year.** What day must this have been? **117. voices of the dead.** Explain. The description of this

battle is weird but splendid. Contrast with the picture of the silent battle field in the lines following. **135. voice,** the sound of the ocean; referred to again in ll. 139–141. **148. so,** if. **160. purport,** the ideals for which it has existed. **161. quick,** as in the Biblical expression, "the quick and the dead." See *Dict.* **168. Excalibur**: see Note I.

170–440. These were the lines which originally formed the poem *Morte d'Arthur*. **177. chancel**: see *Dict.* **180. a great water.** What was this? **182. unsolder,** breaks apart. **189. Camelot**: see Note II. **191. Merlin**: see Note I. **198, 199. Rose . . . lake, Clothed . . . wonderful**: see these lines in Note I. **206. lightly,** quickly. **224. haft**: see *Dict.* Also see description of this brand in Note I. **228. This . . . mind,** a line taken from the *Æneid*. **248. lief,** beloved. **262. obedience . . . rule**: see note on *Lancelot and Elaine* (707, 713). Why was Bedivere so loath to throw the sword away? **272. Maiden of the Lake**: see Note I. **284–285. I heard . . . reeds**: *cf.* ll. 238–239. These repetitions are similar to those found in the epics of Homer. Malory uses them as well as Tennyson. **289. Authority . . . king,** *i.e.* the king loses his authority. **307. northern morn,** the Aurora Borealis. **308. isles of winter,** icebergs. **312. Clothed . . . wonderful**: *cf.* l. 199 and note. **337. blue eyes**: see Note I. **350. Clothed . . . breath,** the vapor of his breath, condensed in the cold air. **366. Three queens**: see ll. 452–456; also Note I. **377. casque**: see *Dict.* **383. greaves and cuisses**: see *Dict.* **384. light and lustrous curls**: see Note I. **401. Holy Elders,** the three "wise men of the East." See *Matthew* ii. 1–12. **403. image . . . world.** According to Malory, the Round Table was intended to typify "the roundness of the world." **408. The old . . . new**: see this line in Note I. **427. Avilion**: see Note II. **434–435. swan . . . carol**: see note on *Rape of the Lock* (262–263).

441–469. These lines were added for the volume of 1870 as a conclusion to the *Idylls*. **445. From . . . goes**: see this line in Merlin's 'riddling triplets,' Note I. **469. And . . . year.** Notice the quiet ending, producing the effect, "all passion spent," suitable to the close of the epic poem. (See INTRODUCTION, p. xcv.) And discuss, on the basis of the idylls and ballads so far read, the nature of the idyllic, ballad, and epic forms of poetry. (See INTRODUCTION, pp. xcii, xciv, ci.)

INDEX

In the following Index the Roman numerals refer to the Introduction, — the *Principles of Poetry;* the Arabic numerals refer chiefly to the pages on the *Progress of Poetry*, — its evolution, history, and the lives and works of English poets. The names of authors who are treated at length in this volume are printed in SMALL CAPITALS; titles of poems treated at length are printed in **bold-face type**; while the names of important titles mentioned in the book are indicated by *italics*. A liberal system of cross references in the Notes has rendered any detailed indexing of notes unnecessary.

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